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129

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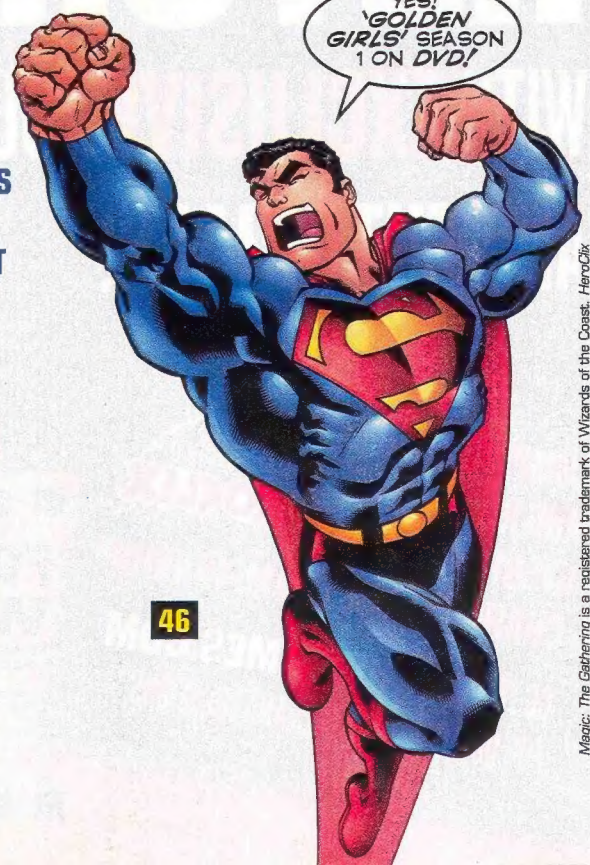


THIS MONTH'S COVER

Todd Lockwood's Angel of Despair from *Magic: Guildpact* is just one of the many secrets we've uncovered for our super-duper preview of the best and biggest games of 2006. Whether you're into CCGs, minis, RPGs or video games, all the action starts on page 36. Just make sure to hit the head before you leave, cuz we ain't stoppin'!



**SPECIAL
2006
PREVIEW
ISSUE!**



46

HERE COMES THE NEXT BIG THING

Anticipation. It's an incredibly powerful emotion.

Sometimes just the idea of an event is way more interesting than the event itself. Just look at my senior prom. But that's a story for another blog.

Invariably, the majority of upcoming events fail to live up to the hype. But we just love to believe the hype. I'll admit it, I'm a glutton for hype. I love trailers, teasers, coming attractions and previews. And after the event passes, whether it's good or not, I get excited about the next "Next Big Thing."

"I'll admit it, I'm a glutton for hype. I love trailers, teasers, coming attractions and previews."

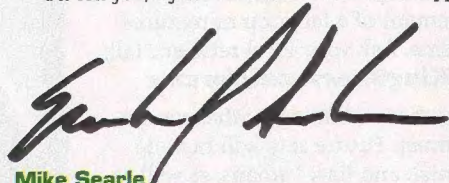
But I'm genuinely excited about 2006. I mean, what's not to love about the aftermath of *Ravnica*, which in my opinion is the greatest *Magic* release EVER! (How's that for hype?)

Heading into February, *Vs.* unleashes a fresh crop of mutants on the Marvel U with a new X-Men-themed set, then one-ups it with the DC Universe-shattering *Infinite Crisis*, then drops a galactic bomb with its universe-spanning *Heralds of Galactus* expansion. Over on the *HeroClix* front, we're previewing the entire run of DC figs from next month's *Collateral Damage* release. With events that huge, how could gamers and comic book fans not geek out in '06?

That's not even counting the cylons showing up in the new *Battlestar Galactica* CCG, Conan muscling in on his own card game, four million fans worldwide finally getting their due with a *World of Warcraft* CCG, and Japan's hottest anime franchise, *Naruto*, storming the U.S. shores. And, this may be the biggest year ever for video games with three—count 'em, three—high-end consoles in Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 and Nintendo Revolution releasing in a 15-month window.

There are more games being released this year than any other year in human history. Well, okay, maybe I have no statistical data for that, but it sure feels that way. So, as a public service—and to satisfy our appetite for the latest gaming goodness—*InQuest* tracked down the status on all your favorite properties. Flip over to page 36 and feast your eyes on our massive 2006 preview if you want to share in the glorious hype.

I'll tell you, I just can't wait to see what happens. But then again, I never can.



Mike Searle
Executive Editor
Wizard Entertainment

GUYS LIKE US *InQuest* staffers reveal things you'd rather not know

What is your New Year's resolution?



BRENT FISHBAUGH ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

I'm finally gonna step up and get that frontal lobe surgery the doc keeps recommending. Although he's pretty sure my creativity will take a hit. I'd like to be able to go to sleep at night and not worry about waking up naked and covered in *Yu-Gi-Oh!* cards.



JEREMY SMITH ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Now that I've gotten my face into the magazine a bunch of times, clearly the next step is to get it onto a CCG card. *Magic*, *L5R*, *Vampire*, *Raw Deal*. If Richard Garfield, Kai Budde and our illustrious database engineer Jeff Hannes—he was on a *Doomtown* card—can do it, why not me?



THORIN MCGEE ASSOCIATE EDITOR

I resolve to find the next mega-millions gaming product and get rich off it just like Peter Adkison did with *Magic*. Because when someone asks me, "What's the most expensive gaming product you ever bought," I want to be able to answer "Gen Con." Or possibly even "Peter Adkison."



MATT CABRAL ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As a recently married man, I'd like to spend more quality time with my significant other watching chick flicks, and less playing video games. Of course, the buttload of new games and consoles coming out in 2006 will make this impossible, leaving me with only one option. Cloning.

masthead

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GAME PREVIEWS NOT FOUND IN THIS ISSUE

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MAGIC NUMBERS... INQUESTS PAST... 'HALO 3'?...

It's coming.

We're talking about the horde of games that's going to keep you locked in the game room or in your mom's basement like a castle under siege throughout 2006. It's coming, and we're the only ones who know what that means. You've got more than 40 pages of 2006 preview in this baby. Wondering what the future holds for Magic, HeroClix, Vs. System or any other game seeing print in '06? Everything you need to know starts on page 36. And if that's not enough, we've got dozens of video game reviews in "Plugged In," with everything you need to know about all those holiday releases that didn't make their way into your Christmas stocking.

So your New Year's resolution was to read more InQuest. (Trust us, it was. We were there, along with Bigfoot and Nessie. We have video of the whole thing.) This is the "Inquisition" that'll help you do that. From how to get back issues to the scoop on Halo 3, we're answering all your questions that are fit to print. And the ones that aren't go up on the bathroom wall.

Thorin McGee
Associate Editor



ONE TRICK PONY

Magic is where it's at. Other games come and go, but Magic endures. When I get my gaming magazine, I want Magic on the cover. It's been a long run and I enjoyed many of your articles, but you've got a new crew now—and, I think, some unholy deal with Upper Deck. Goodbye and good luck.

Andrew
via e-mail

Hey Andrew, we love Magic even more than you do, but it's just not the only game in town. Upper Deck makes some damn fine games, and Wizards of the Coast puts out more good games than we can fit in a single issue. Magic, Hecatomb, Duel Masters and their triad of CMGs—they're all too good for us to ignore. And if having Magic on the cover is so important to you, take a look at the one you're holding.

'RAVNICA' SLIGHTED

I picked up IQ Gamer #127 expecting a full review of Ravnica's core expansion, and all I find is a brief summary of the first four guilds and your picks for the top 10 cards of the set. No offense, but if these picks are anything like your typical top 10, then about three of them belong in the list. You didn't even explain the Boros key ability.

Alex Case
Amarillo, Texas

We test our butts off to come up with those top 10s, but sometimes a handful of guys testing alone won't find the same metagame as thousands of players trying desperately to make the pro tour. Still, I like our chances with Putrefy, Watchwolf, Lightning Helix, the new duals and Dimir Cutpurse from Ravnica. At six pages, that article was as big as anything in the magazine, Alex, but we'll see if we can give you a little sumptin' extra for Guildpact.

DO YOU MAKE THIS CRAP UP?

For all of my years playing and enjoying the game of Magic, I have a few burning questions. How do card value authorities actually come up with their values? I realize that rares are more valuable than uncommons which are more valuable than commons, but how are exact prices put to that scale? And if it is just a simple matter of supply and demand, how is the demand for a card calculated? To put it another way, how do they know how much I am willing to pay for a card?

Max Dorsey
via e-mail

You might as well ask the fellas at NASDAQ how they come up with their stock

prices, but we asked InQuest's market guru, Jeremy Smith, to give us the lowdown.

"A bunch of criteria factor in. We not only survey tons of dealers, but we also travel to game shops, hit tournaments for a variety of games and screen oodles of online auction and sales data. From all that, we're able to crunch a lot of numbers and figure out what's hot and in what price ranges cards are selling."

BABY GOT BACK ISSUES?

I would like information on ordering back issues, from 1997, of InQuest magazine. The latest issue I have is #27, and I'd like to find some of the issues between then and now.

I recently obtained a computer, which I was hoping would make my search easier. I would appreciate any info you can give me.

Brian Dawson
Chatsworth, Ill.

Getting online is the first step to ordering any back issues of InQuest we still have around, just like it is for most things you have to hide from your mother. Just go to the Store section of wizarduniverse.com and look under the Magazines tab for InQuest. You can also find great deals on subscriptions, merchandise and Wizard World convention tickets.

RENAISSANCE GEEK

I'm a geek in more ways than one and I'm proud of it. I'm a huge video game buff. I'm a big fan of Warhammer 40,000 (the video game), and when I heard they were making an RTS for it, I nearly pissed myself. The expansion left me wanting more. Have you heard anything about a second expansion?

Also, I love Magic. Ravnica is the shiznit. If you ever played either of the Lost Kingdoms games, you know that they're card-casting-oriented, and it got me thinking: what if they combined Magic and that theme? You could cast your Avatar of Woe as a summons, then play your Shivan Dragon as an independent to clean up.

Mick Lynch
via e-mail

We haven't heard anything about another Warhammer video game expansion, but you can be sure you'll see one if this expansion does well. And hey, if you like Warhammer strategy, don't forget about



WHAT IF?

CARDS BY THE
FANS FOR THE FANS



Chris Miller from New York sent us these suggestions based on modern life. He said, "It's a lot like *Mirrodin* because it's full of shiny artifacts, humans that sprout electronics from every pocket, and a nameless being with a watermelon for a head is secretly controlling us all." We're not sure what the hell he's talking about, but the cards are pretty cool.

I WANT IN!

If you want to be part of the fun, send your card ideas to the address located at the end of "Inquisition" with "WHAT IF? IDEAS" in the subject line; we're allergic to spam, so don't send any.

the Warhammer 40,000 CCG from Sabertooth. There's also this tiny non-collectible miniatures game by a little known company called Games Workshop.

As for Magic, we'd love to see a good video game adaptation. But from Battle-grounds—which essentially joined Magic and dodgeball—to the old Playstation and PC games that took it to the RTS realm, so far the best Magic video game has been Magic Online.

YOU SCREWED UP

You might already know about this error in the article "City of Traitors," in *IQ Gamer* #127. But just in case you are not aware, I thought I would point it out to you. And I am aware that no one is perfect, so how 'bout if you put this in *IQ* and don't bash me too much? Anyhow, the error is in the deck Thieves' Guild: Chord of Calling is not a black card or a creature. I would like to know what was supposed to go in its place because that deck does look like it could have potential.

"Pidge" Chris Kent Richter
via e-mail

In fact, all the cards in the deck are listed, but the first section should read "Black Spells," and the Chords of Calling shouldn't be there. Otherwise, that's the whole deck. Our bad. And since you begged, I won't descend upon you like God's wrath on Mooby the Golden Calf.

SUPERMAG

I was just looking over my *Wizard Superhero Gaming Special Edition* again and realized that I haven't seen a new one in quite a while. Could you please let me know when a new issue will be released? If there is already a new one out, when was it released?

Mario Nardi, Jr.
via e-mail

The Wizard Superhero Gaming Special was a one-shot, meaning it was a stand-alone edition that never had a sequel planned. But we're certainly not ruling out a follow-up with Vs. and HeroClix running wild, City of Villains just earning its cape and a new Marvel Heroes board game on the horizon. When the next one's coming, you'll get the word long in advance right here in InQuest.

WHERE'S 'HALO 3'?

In the Xbox 360 feature in issue #128, you told me a lot about what to expect from the Xbox 360. I didn't know that you'd be able to put your own music as a game soundtrack. That's going to be awesome! But you didn't tell me anything about the one thing I really care about: Will there be a *Halo 3* before the end of the year?

187rabidwarthog781
via e-mail

Bill Gates has hinted publicly that they've got something up their sleeve to parry the PS3's opening salvo. But officially, Microsoft ain't talking. We're betting we'll hear a bunch about it at E3 in May, though.

ORKS & DORKS & TROLL DOLLS?

You guys should do more cartoons like the game factory comic. ["Inside the Asylum," page 56 of *IQ* #128.] The beholder guard was awesome and so were the pokémon [neopets, actually] beating Worf and Wolverine at strip poker. Why did they want to play strip poker with pokémon, anyway? I have a question about the freaky

hair salon next to Juzám, though. What is a troll doll hair stylist doing in a game factory?

Chuck Baker
Chicago, Ill.

That's actually the anime warrior hair salon, Chuck, where guys like Goku and Yugi go to chill out, get their fix of White Rain, and maybe the occasional pedicure or cucumber facial. I'll be sure to tell Vegeta you called him a troll doll, though. And by the way, the back waxing room a couple floors up... That's me.

MY IQ CHRISTMAS CATALOG

The "Ultimate Gamer Gift Guide" you did in *IQ Gamer* #128 was exactly what I was looking for. I've never been to any of the conventions, and the hobby shops around me don't carry stuff like this. I've already put my order in for some Cthulhu Christmas cards from Chaosium and bought the "Clerics" t-shirt. Then I circled some items and gave the magazine to my mom. This is gonna be the best Christmas ever thanks to *InQuest*.

Steve Frye
via e-mail

I hope you get everything you want for Christmas, Steve. I hope you circled a couple of those games, too, because Paranoia and Shadows over Camelot both rock.

IS IT YOUR SUPER POWER TO SUCK?

Your article on *JLA* [the Vs. expansion, *IQ* #128, p. 50] was horrible. How was Secret Origins not on the Top 10 or in any decks except the crappy unfiliated one? It's way better than Philosopher's Stone, and so are Hero's Welcome and Kooley Kooley Kooley.

Rick Comminchey
via e-mail

Behold the power of tutors ... to make any Top 10 list more boring than your mother's Tupperware parties. Listen, tutors are great. Yeah tutors. But really, the way Vs. is put together, half of any Top 10 list could be tutors. We're trying to mix it up a little. Not to mention, who doesn't like a shiny, ultra-powered stone that leaves your opponent with the mental might of Anna Nicole Smith at the height of her E! show?

DOOM ME, BABY

Upper Deck does a Justice League set and leaves out the Legion of Doom. What's up with that? I used to love watching the Legion and the JLA go at it on Saturday morning cartoons, the set feels incomplete without them.

*Luke Nevlin
Galveston, Texas*

Yeah, what this game needs is Hawk and Animal in spiked shoulder pads and their ultimate weapon, the Doomsday Device... Oh, you meant the other Legion of Doom, from the original "Justice League" cartoon? Well those guys had doomsday devices too, we guess.

That team wasn't exactly comic accurate at the time, but since Alex Ross has put a similar team in a recent comic

miniseries, we wouldn't be surprised to see Lex and pals show up in Infinite Crisis.

SNACK ATTACK

Thorin, did you actually eat that Game Boy Micro (IQ #128, p. 58)?

*Tim
via e-mail*

You mean the one I was biting in our "Holiday Gift Guide"? No, and nor should any kids who might be reading at home. Having said that, the screen does taste like gumdrops.

ROCK THE 'SHARD

Thanks for running my letter on D&D Online. I still want to see an MMO set in Faerûn, but I guess this is fine for Wizard's first MMO. At least Dragonshard didn't disappoint me, though. That game is awesome, and Tom Chick's review was right on the money about it. I don't know how it compares to other RTS games, but it's really good for an old D&D player.

*Ted
Milwaukee, Wis.*

With how long it took for us to see Dragonshard, we were starting to worry that it became vaporware, but they did a good job. Between Dragonshard and Warham-

mer: Dawn of War, old-school gaming is ruling the RTS realm. It's about time those electronic whippersnappers started to show a little respect for their elders.

And you should respect your elders, especially old fogeys like us at InQuest. At the same time, though, there's nothing like nubile new blood, especially the kind we're going to be seeing throughout 2006. Check out the preview and get a start on next year's Christmas list.

Thorin McGee

Associate editor Thorin McGee already has half of his 2006 Christmas list written. Unfortunately, it's all stuff he didn't get in 2005. He did, however, get the key to the city of Ravnica on page 36.

Send your letters, and please include your name and address, to:
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JAPANESE JUSTICE

HOST NATION FORGETS NEAR-MISSES WITH SWEEP OF MAGIC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Japan's good at winning more than just "Iron Chef" and karaoke competitions now. For many years, the United States was the dominant nation on the international *Magic* scene. Claiming three individual world champions and nearly every team title since the world championships began in 1994, the Americans reigned supreme across every aspect of the game. While other countries have gradually risen to the forefront, none could claim that it had the best *Magic* players across the board ... until now.

At last month's world championships in Yokohama, Japan, not only did the home team crown its first champ in Katsuhiko Mori, Japan also took home the team title and the Pro Player of the Year award with young phenom Kenji Tsumura. But that's just part of the larger story that Worlds brings to the table every year.

DAY ONE: STANDARD-ISSUE WEAPONRY

The five-day tournament kicked off with six rounds of Standard play on day one. Beatdown players had their Boros decks, stocked to the gills with Lightning Helix, Isamaru and Umezawa's Jitte. Control was well represented as well, with variants on monoblue control that splashed black for cards like Cranial Extraction and Last Gasp showing up everywhere. Midrange black/green/white decks with Hypnotic Specter, Dimir Cutpurse and Putrefy also appeared in droves. Even combo showed up in decks based around Enduring Ideal and nasty enchantments such as Form of the Dragon and Zur's Weirding. And of course, many flavors of Gifts Ungiven decks came to play, from controllish versions to Greater Good reanimator decks.

But the breakout deck of the day was the Japanese players' secret weapon—a deck that used the token-generating land Vitu-Ghazi, the City-Tree, and the stifling enchantment Glare of Subdual to lock down opposing threats with an abundance of tokens. Nearly the entire Japanese contingent brought the deck, with one player going 6-0 on day one and three playing

it on the final day, including champion Mori. Check out page 12 for a more in-depth look at the deck.

DAY TWO: BOOSTER SHOTS

The second day of Worlds brought players back to the realm of 40-card decks for six rounds of *Ravnica* Booster Draft. Players mostly stuck to one of *Ravnica*'s four guilds, though the occasional rogue decks based around off-color combos like blue/red showed up too.

One popular, unconventional strategy utilized House Dimir's decking engine. Rather than drafting strong beatdown creatures, these players focused on a strong control element plus kill cards like Vedalken Entrancer; Duskmantle, House of Shadows; or bomb rare Glimpse the Unthinkable.

Selesnya decks also represented the guild well with token-based convoke builds. Such decks used Scatter the Seeds and Fists of Ironwood to spew out scads of critters to hold off enemy forces and power out quick Siege Wurms and Guardians of Vitu-Ghazi. Boros and Golgari players went with more traditional beatdown decks with Boros weenies Skyknight Legionnaire and Thundersong Trumpeter, or black/green fattie Golgari Rotwurm.

DAY THREE: HYPER EXTENDED

Metagame? What metagame? Though four major Extended deck archetypes—black/green Rock, red/white Boros, affinity and Psychatog—showed up on the third day, numerous other decks were deemed worthy enough for Worlds play by attendees. Most of the Japanese players brought white/blue Isochron Scepter/Orim's Chant decks to the table. The Solitary Confinement/Seismic Assault/Life from the Loam deck that won Grand Prix: Bilbao also made a decent showing, including placing finalist Frank Karsten of The Netherlands into the final day with an undefeated constructed record.

Eventual top-four finisher Akira Asahara dove back into the old-school

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LOTS A 'LEAGUE If you still don't know your Flash from your Funky Flashman, we answer all your Vs. questions on page 21.



5 F.R. FIGHTING We pick the best character for each *LSR* clan. Period. Hands-down. No doubt about it. Page 28.



ELRIC-TRIC BOOGALOO Edward has a fistful of identical twins in the *FMA TCG*. We tell you which make the grade on page 31.

era of *Invasion/Odyssey*, locking down a final-day spot with his "Balancing Tings" Balancing Act/Terravore deck. Loads of other builds, from Astral Slide to madness to Gifts Ungiven, filled out the rest of the field. Kenji Tsumura scored the first overall Japanese victory of the weekend here, clinching the Pro Player of the Year race by a single pro tour point over Frenchman Olivier Ruël. Among other things, the award scores him free hotel and airfare to every pro tour next year and a berth at next year's *Magic* Invitational tournament. Frenchman Pierre Canali did score a win for his country, though, taking the Rookie of the Year title on the back of his Extended Pro Tour: Columbus victory.

DAY FOUR: TEAM STEAM

Most players got a breather on day four as more than 40 national teams squared off in Rochester Draft. The United States was in first place going into the day, while host Japan was back in seventh. The Japanese managed to pull a 3-0-1 record in the format, including a sweep of the Americans in the second-to-last round, to claim a berth in the team finals. The U.S. team rebounded from the loss with a win over the Norwegians to regain the overall lead and a rematch with the Japanese.



DAY FIVE: THE FINAL COUNTDOWN—AND CONTROVERSY

The final day kicked off with four Japanese players—Mori, Asahara, Tomohiro Kaji and Shuuhei Nakamura—out to defend their home turf, with Asahara sporting a self-made Enduring Ideal deck and the others carrying the Glare of Subdual torch. Dutchman Karsten brought Greater Good reanimator, Singaporean Ding Leong had green/blue agro-control and Portuguese national team members Andre Coimbra and Marcio Carvalho brought blue/black/green and blue/black control decks, respectively.

When the dust from the first two rounds settled, Mori and Karsten sat across from each other at the final table after Karsten squeaked in by pulling off some astounding Gifts Ungiven tricks. After the Japanese team soundly defeated the Americans in their Rochester rematch, the individual finals began.

Game one went according to Karsten's plan, establishing a series of recurring Yosei, the Morning Stars, to lock down Mori's board. In the second game, Mori came back, using a sideboarded Seedborn Muse to break out of a similar lock. In game three, Mori took the lead with his own Yosei lock.

At this point, though, the judges and players were alerted that a mistake had been made in the second game. While Seedborn Muse allows you to untap during an opponent's untap step, Yosei forces the opponent to skip that step, denying the Muse's untap. Mori's extra untap allowed him to cast Congregation at Dawn, a key play in the game. The judges reviewed video of the game for nearly 20 minutes, but determined that since no one caught it and since Mori didn't intentionally cheat to gain an advantage, the result of the game stood. Mori took the title in the following game with a swarm of Yoseis. ■ **Jeremy Smith**

FATE OF NATIONS

Final Medal Count in the Magic Olympics

Magic's premier tournament didn't just crown a new world champion; it also pitted the three-person national teams of more than 50 different countries against each other. Who reigned supreme in each main format? If they were giving out medals, here's how it would have broken down.

STANDARD



JAPAN



CHINA



SOUTH AFRICA

The Japanese, led by national champion Takuma Morofuji, stormed their way to the top of day one's Standard competition with an impressive record of 14 wins against just three losses and a draw. Morofuji posted a sterling 5-0-1 record.

BOOSTER DRAFT



UNITED STATES



BELGIUM



PORTUGAL

Both the Americans and the Belgians posted 14-4 records on the second day, but the U.S. snagged the gold due to the team's higher overall score. National champion Antonino De Rosa and runner-up Neil Reeves each went 5-1 in draft, while third member Jon Sonne went 4-2 on the day.

EXTENDED



SINGAPORE



THE NETHERLANDS



PORTUGAL

Singapore jumped into the third overall slot after day three with a 12-5-1 composite record in the Extended format, eking out the gold on tiebreakers over The Netherlands on the strength of top-eight finisher Ding Leong's performance. Portugal nabbed its second medal, moving into second place overall behind the U.S. entering the final team day.

TEAM COMPETITION



JAPAN



UNITED STATES



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic was the only team to go 4-0 in day four's Team Rochester Draft, but it wasn't enough to surpass the big dogs. Japan smoked the Americans twice on its way to the team title, once in the Swiss rounds and again in the finals.

FINAL TOTALS

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
JAPAN	5	0	1	6
UNITED STATES	1	3	0	4
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	0	0	3	3
THE NETHERLANDS	0	2	0	2
PORTUGAL	0	0	2	2
SINGAPORE	1	0	0	1
BELGIUM	0	1	0	1
CHINA	0	1	0	1
SOUTH AFRICA	0	0	1	1



A HIERARCH CALLING The powerful pachyderm was one of the Glare deck's many heavy hitters.

GLARING EMISSION

SELESNYA'S ÜBER-ENCHANTMENT SHOCKS PLAYERS AND SURGES TO TOP OF STANDARD FORMAT AT MAGIC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Looking for a cure to the boring old Standard drawl? This hot little number took home the title at the 2005 world championships in Yokohama, the third straight green/white build to do so after 2003's Mirari's Wake and 2004's Astral Slide decks.

MAGIC TOURNEY DECK

BREAKDOWN 39 R, 14 U, 22 C

THREAT LEVEL 10 Green & white delight

RITUAL OF SUBDUAL

Many players say that *Ravnica*'s most powerful limited card is Glare of Subdual, a watered-down Opposition—Glare doesn't hit lands—that caters to the colors of small, cost-efficient men. This deck uses elves of the Llanowar and Wood variety to ramp up massive amounts of mana and give your Glare a team to tap your opponent down with. You also have access to Vitu-Ghazi and Selesnya Guildmage, which allow you to produce a saproling army and even pump them up to gi-normous proportions. It's a little bit like the old Squirrel Opposition decks of *Odyssey*, save for the fact that you also play huge trampling monsters.

Glare might be the star of the show, but the deck hinges on the performance of strong beaters like Loxodon Hierarch, Kodama of the North Tree and Yosei, the Morning Star. Umezawa's Jitte is in the mix, as it has been in virtually every deck featuring more than two creatures since it joined Standard. Congregation at Dawn is very strong because of the quality of your creatures, ensuring that you have three straight hits of devastation in a row.

HOSTILE TAKEOVER

The mission is simple: Rule the board with tons of mana and supersized creatures, tap down any blockers they may have and tromp into the score zone with your green-and-white super team. When this fails, rely on your token army tricks to win the day. Control decks will have too many must-counter spells to deal with, along with endless tokens. Smaller, less manly aggro builds will just get outsized. The only things you should ever really fear are the occasional Wildfire deck or a black build with heavy discard. Enduring Ideal could also be problematic, so Cranial Extraction and a black source might be a good inclusion. The sideboard offers up some options for a really

open metagame, but you should tune your own to deal with what you plan to play against. Green and white have some of the finest sideboard options available—Wrath of God, Faith's Fetters and the anti-land destruction Kodama's Reach immediately spring to mind—so mix it up.

This is one of the most consistent and resilient decks in Standard, so if you're looking for a well-rounded build that has high percentages and steady yet unspectacular production, this deck's for you. While the deck is a little pricey in terms of hunting down all of the rares, it will pay off quickly as you decimate your competition with hordes of green and white beatdown.

■ Jesse Sigler

THE DECK Glaring Goodness

ARTIFACTS

- 3 Pitihing Needle
- 3 Umezawa's Jitte

GREEN CREATURES

- 3 Arashi, the Sky Asunder
- 3 Kodama of the North Tree
- 3 Llanowar Elves
- 4 Loxodon Hierarch
- 4 Wood Elves

GOLD CREATURES

- 4 Selesnya Guildmage

GOLD SPELLS

- 2 Congregation at Dawn
- 3 Glare of Subdual

WHITE CREATURES

- 2 Yosei, the Morning Star

WHITE SPELLS

- 2 Seed Spark

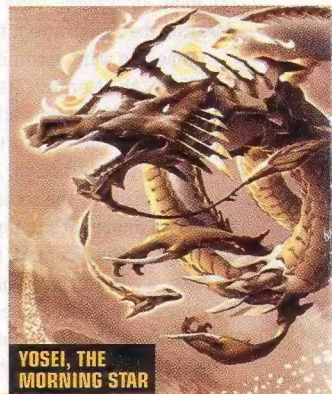
LANDS

- 4 Brushland
- 5 Forest
- 1 Okina, Temple to the Grandfathers
- 1 Plains
- 4 Selesnya Sanctuary
- 4 Temple Garden
- 4 Vitu-Ghazi, the City-Tree

SIDEBOARD

- 2 Carven Caryatid
- 2 Greater Good
- 3 Hokori, Dust Drinker

- 1 Kodama of the North Tree
- 1 Kodama's Reach
- 2 Naturalize
- 1 Seedborn Muse
- 1 Wrath of God
- 2 Yosei, the Morning Star



YOSEI, THE MORNING STAR



AURIOK ATTACK Infinite mana is just a combo away.

THE LION KING

NEW COMBO DESTROYS THE FIELD AT MAGIC'S LEGACY GRAND PRIX

Legacy has long been viewed as the place where broken decks from long-gone Standard environments go to grow old and die. The rare sight of a Grand Prix in Philadelphia serving Legacy as its main dish stirred the format's noble followers and brought some new and exciting decks into the picture. One build that got a lot of attention was an Auriok Salvagers/Lion's Eye Diamond combo piloted to a top-eight finish by Connecticut player Paul Serignese.

MAGIC TOURNEY DECK

BREAKDOWN **29 R, 18 U, 28 C**

THREAT LEVEL **9 Savage Salvagers**

NATURAL INFINITY

Coined "Bomb Salvage," this zany new archetype focuses on the abusive synergy between Auriok Salvagers, Lion's Eye Diamond, Gamekeeper and Living Wish. With Salvagers in play, you can resurrect your Lion's Eye Diamond over and over for infinite mana, and then pump all that mana into Pyrite Spellbomb or Chromatic Sphere to draw your deck. You can also pop the Diamond in response to your own Living Wish in order to give you enough mana to cast a Wished-for Salvagers. This allows you to go for the quick-kill with Maga, Traitor to Mortals, or burn out the opponent with Pyrite Spellbomb. The best outcome is with Dark Ritual and a solid hand, when you're able to get this shindig pieced together on turn two and go off on turn three. Hopefully, you'll drop an uncontested Maga that wins the game right there and then, no questions asked.

To reach glorious combo paradise, you'll need some help. Tainted Pact works with the snow-covered lands—remember, just the card names have to be different, not their types—to help assemble your combotron, while Cabal Therapy and Duress allow you to snipe any ways to kill your Salvagers or counter Maga. Gamekeeper helps find your Salvagers and can be fed to Therapy for additional discard hijinks; it also serves as a Moat against goblins and fills your graveyard with combo pieces and flashbackable Therapies in case you hit another Keeper before you hit a Salvagers. The Animate Dead and Necromancy are additional ways to assemble your combo.

LEGACY'S ALLURE

Legacy is infested with goblins. Like the gremlins of '80s cinema fame, goblins have infiltrated this format and multiplied to excessive numbers. If you want to do well, you have to have ways to beat goblins in all of their incar-

nations. Kagemaro is a hot one against the little red men, as is continual Spellbomb recursion. Threshold combinations of blue and green have also been popular, as well as Winter Orb affinity and control decks based on cycling with Lightning Rift. You want to have outs against the majority of the decks in the format, and this deck has tricks for just about everything.

If you plan to see a lot of goblins, drop a Duress and add another Salvagers. Tsunami can be great against blue-based control, as well as the aforementioned threshold builds. If people in your local metagame have figured out the combo and are ready for Maga, go the long route and bring in other creatures from your sideboard to surprise them, like the Nishobas, or just pick an extra weapon like Kumano, Master Yamabushi.

Make sure to watch out for a few foils to the deck. Force of Will can stop you cold, as can open white mana that can fuel Swords to Plowshares, Abeyance or Orim's Chant. Goblins also have Pyrokinesis and Gempalm Incinerator to ruin your day too. Make full use of your Duresses and Therapies to clear your path to victory before going off with your combo. ■ **Jesse Sigler**

THE DECK Bomb Salvage

ARTIFACTS

- 4 Chromatic Sphere
- 4 Lion's Eye Diamond
- 1 Pyrite Spellbomb

BLACK SPELLS

- 2 Animate Dead
- 4 Cabal Therapy
- 4 Dark Ritual
- 4 Duress
- 3 Innocent Blood
- 4 Living Wish
- 1 Necromancy
- 4 Tainted Pact

GREEN CREATURES

- 3 Gamekeeper

GREEN SPELLS

- 1 Krosan Reclamation

WHITE CREATURES

- 2 Auriok Salvagers

LANDS

- 1 Bayou
- 1 Bloodstained Mire
- 2 Forest
- 1 Plains
- 2 Polluted Delta
- 1 Savannah
- 1 Scrubland
- 2 Snow-Covered Forest
- 3 Snow-Covered Swamp
- 2 Swamp
- 3 Windswept Heath

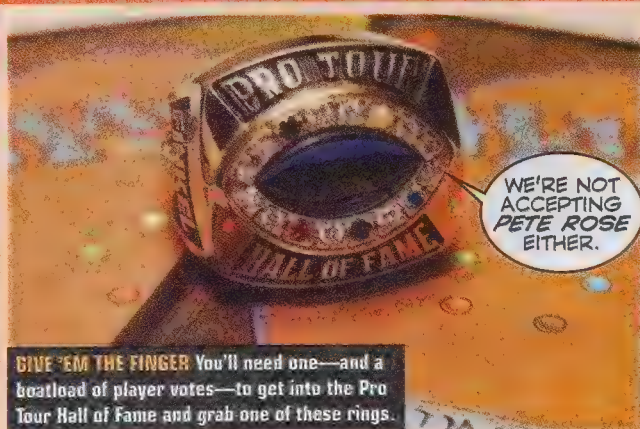
SIDEBOARD

- 1 Auriok Salvagers
- 1 City of Brass
- 1 Gamekeeper
- 1 Kagemaro, First to Suffer
- 1 Maga, Traitor to Mortals
- 3 Phantom Nishoba
- 1 Phyrexian Tower
- 1 Ray of Revelation
- 1 Trinket Mage
- 3 Tsunami
- 1 Viridian Zealot

red text = rare card

BUZZ BIN

Who's Hot in Gaming



GIVE 'EM THE FINGER You'll need one—and a boatload of player votes—to get into the Pro Tour Hall of Fame and grab one of these rings.

'MAGIC' BLING Along with a lifetime level-3 membership on the *Magic* Pro Players Club and being honored at an award ceremony at last month's World Championship, each 2005 Pro Tour Hall of Fame inductee received a spiffy, gem-encrusted ring (above). Yes, that is a ring of diamonds punctuated by a ruby, pearl, etc. signifying the mana symbols around that big honkin' blue centerpiece.

TREASURED ISLANDS Gale Force Nine (gf9.com) has just begun offering new sets and scenery for WizKids constructible strategy games such as *Pirates* for around \$30 each. When you surf over to its site, be sure to check out their cool custom gaming tables for *HeroClix* and new *War-machine* accessories.

FREE HECATOMB! But does that mean you can play it for free, or that it has to be freed from a government conspiracy designed to keep you from knowing the truth? What if the only way to find out was to go to the *Hecatomb* website's forums page and play a game that may or may not be real? Would you have the nerve to become a Horseman in a game that ends the world?

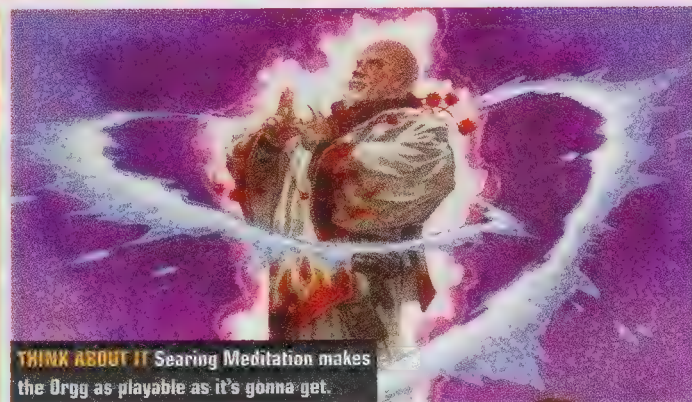
STATES OF THE UNION *Magic's* Champs tournaments are getting an extreme makeover. Instead of one paltry Standard tournament for bragging rights in your state, territory or island, there will be Two-Headed Giant Champs on March 18, Limited Champs on June 24 and Standard Champs on October 21. All participants will receive a promo cards with a unique alternate card frame that's not like anything we've seen yet.

NEW DEAL FOR RAW

DEAL The *WWE Raw Deal* license has been extended for two more years. That means at least six more sets' worth of Stacy Keibler, Trish Stratus and Christy Hemme hotness.

■ IQ staff

TRIPLE H



DOUBLE DOG DARE

SOULGORGER ORGG FINALLY MAKES GOOD

Hoo-boy. We've got a doozy for ya this month. Soulgorger Orgg not only got our award as the worst card in all of *Judgment*, but it's simply one of the worst creatures ever created. Five mana for a 6/6 trampler doesn't quite cut it when it puts you in sizzle range. Could we make the Orgg work?

Soulgorger Orgg: Creature — Nightmare Orgg, 3

Trample. When Soulgorger Orgg comes into play, you lose all but 1 life. When Soulgorger Orgg leaves play, you gain life equal to the life you lost when it came into play. 6/6.

MAGIC THEME DECK

BREAKDOWN 19 R, 23 U, 18 C

THREAT LEVEL 6 Orgg-asmic

It took a bit of thinking, and probably killed a few brain cells in the process, but we figured that the life gain ability could be halfway decent if comboed with *Ravnica's*

Searing Meditation. The enchantment lets you pay two mana to deal damage any time you gain life, so if we had a way to repeatedly use that comes-into-play ability without getting fried, it would be a pretty formidable weapon.

The key here? *Astral Slide*, which lets you remove a creature from the game every time you cycle a card. But this isn't just any *Astral Slide* deck. If we included the traditional kill cards like *Lightning Rift*, *Eternal Dragon* and *Decree of Justice*, that'd defeat the purpose of running our Orgg. So this deck sticks to the core control cards and the lands as far as cycling cards go.

In the early game, you've got *Ghostly Prison* and cycled *Slice and Dices* to hold off opposing threats. *Astral Slide* and *Otherworldly Journey* also work here; later on, you'll want to save them to slide out your Orgg, though. *Akroma's Blessing* protects your Orgg, while *Akroma's Vengeance* or a hard-cast *Slice* serve as your board clearers.

In addition to the Orgg, you've also got *Renewed Faith* to both cycle for your *Slide* and gain life for the *Meditation*. *Lightning Helix* also powers the latter, as well as taking out critters cheaply. Both can save you from instant-speed damage when you're at one life. Finally, *Reverse the Sands* is your ace in the hole; just Orgg yourself down to one, then on the next turn switch life totals and attack for the win! ■ JS

THE DECK

In Orgg We Trust

GOLD SPELLS

4 *Lightning Helix*
4 *Searing Meditation*

RED CREATURES

4 Soulgorger Orgg

RED SPELLS

2 *Slice and Dice*

WHITE SPELLS

2 *Akroma's Blessing*

3 *Akroma's Vengeance*

4 *Astral Slide*

4 *Ghostly Prison*

3 *Otherworldly Journey*

4 *Renewed Faith*

2 *Reverse the Sands*

LANDS

2 *Bloodstained Mire*

1 *Flooded Strand*

4 *Forgotten Cave*

3 *Mountain*

3 *Plains*

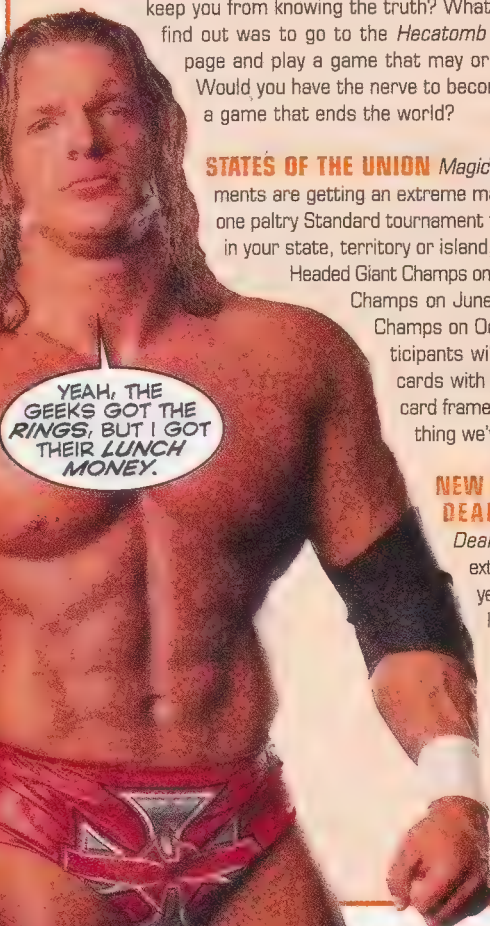
4 *Secluded Steppe*

4 *Sacred Foundry*

1 *Windswept Heath*

2 *Wooded Foothills*

red text = rare card



PAIN ON THE BRAIN

DON'T TAKE MORE DAMAGE THAN NECESSARY FROM 'RAVNICA'S BIGGEST THREATS

1. I have a Watery Grave with Genju of the Fens and Genju of the Falls on it. What happens if I activate both?

- A. It's a 3/2 flier.
- B. It's a 2/2 pumper.
- C. It's either a 3/2 or 2/2 flying pumper.
- D. It becomes a Very Dry Grave.

A. The Grave will have both abilities, and its power and toughness are set by the last ability to resolve.

2. Can I use Perilous Forays to find Sacred Foundry?

- A. Yes. You'll put the Foundry into play tapped.
- B. Yes. You can put the Foundry into play untapped.
- C. No. Sacred Foundry isn't a basic land.
- D. Only if your local card shop is in Fallujah.

A. Perilous Forays looks for basic land types, not basic lands, so any of the Ravnica dual lands can be put into play tapped. The "tapped" clause trumps the Foundry's "untapped" option.

3. Does Windswept Heath let me put a Ravnica dual land into play untapped?

- A. Yes.
- B. Yes, if you pay three life in total.
- C. No, effects that put a Ravnica land into play don't let you use the ability.
- D. DCI floor rules ignore all rules text on lands with a basic land type if you shuffle with the left hand.

B. Paying one life to the fetch land and two life to the dual land will let you put it into play untapped.

4. My opponent is at one life and has a Darkblast in his graveyard. Can I kill him with Underworld Dreams using two Cephalid Looters?

- A. Yes. Any Looter ability will make Underworld Dreams trigger.
- B. Yes. The first activation can be replaced, but the second one can't.
- C. No. The opponent can avoid Underworld Dreams by playing carefully.
- D. Why don't you just attack with the Looters?

C. The opponent can dredge the Darkblast, discard it, and dredge it again for the second activation. Or he can dredge, discard some other card, Darkblast a Looter before resolving the second activation, and then dredge for the second activation.

5. In a Two-Headed Giant game, how many creatures are sacrificed to Woebringer Demon each turn?

- A. Only one.
- B. Only two.
- C. One per active player.



ON TOP OF OLD SMOKEY... Genju of the Spires. A cheesy way to win? You decide.



STUMPER of the MONTH

My opponent attacks with a Genju of the Spires and I block with Patron of the Nerumi. How much life does he lose?

The opponent only loses one life. The animated Mountain and Patron are both destroyed by lethal damage. After that, the Genju is put into the graveyard and will return once its trigger resolves.

D. As many as it takes to keep the Demon happy.

C. Each player whose turn it is sacrifices a creature. You can't sacrifice a creature on behalf of your teammate, and if only one person has a creature to sac, the Woebringer is sacrificed as well.

6. Landwalk works in Two-Headed Giant if...

- A. Either head controls the land.
- B. Both heads control the land.
- C. The head you're attacking controls the land.
- D. Your creature is unblockable until it runs into the other head's creatures.

A. Attacking in 2HG works by attacking the "body" across the table: if either head has the land, your creature is unblockable.

7. If your target for Dream Leash untaps in response to the spell, what happens?

- A. It is returned to your hand.
- B. It is countered.
- C. It resolves like normal.
- D. It escapes until caught by the Dream Dogcatcher.

C. The restriction to play only on a tapped permanent matters only while announcing the spell.

8. What happens if I want to Copy Enchantment an Aura?

- A. Pick where the Copy goes, and then pick the aura it becomes.
- B. Pick what Aura it becomes, and then pick where it goes.
- C. The Copy comes into play as an unattached Aura and is put into the graveyard.

D. Keep your copying, countering and thieving paws to yourself, Mr. Blue Mage.

5. As Copy Enchantment comes into play, you'll pick an Aura and then pick where to attach the Aura.

9. In response to my opponent cycling Gempalm Incinerator targeting my goblin, I Shock his only goblin. How much does my goblin take?

- A. Zero.
- B. One.
- C. Two.
- D. Goblin-on-goblin violence ... so sad.

B. Gempalm Incinerator's ability only counts goblins still in play when its ability resolves.

10. I play Shadow of Doubt in response to my opponent's Enduring Ideal. What happens?

- A. Enduring Ideal is countered.
- B. The Ideal player can't search this turn. The epic copy works like normal.
- C. The player won't be able to search for any Ideals.
- D. You laugh until you fall over, meanie.

B. The player won't be able to search this turn but the epic copies work fine. Whether you can contain your giggles is ... doubtful. ■ John Carter

SENTINEL SMASHERS

HOW TO DESTROY ONE OF THE MOST DEVASTATING DECKS OF THE 'VS. SYSTEM'

What happened? Curve Sentinels used to rule the *Vs. System*. Heroes and villains alike fled in the shadow of their foreboding might. But in November's Pro Circuit LA, they locked up like Dorothy's Tin Man without his oil can. It certainly looks like the mighty have fallen, but it wasn't just one thing that killed them.

■ Jason Grabber-Meyer

BETRAYAL Usually a single copy is good enough to stop the Sent's momentum before it gets going, but a single copy reused with the effect of Dr. Doom, Diabolic Genius, is just crippling. Thanks to Magneto's Brotherhood affiliation, they just don't have the late game to deal with decks like Common Enemy, Gamma Doom or Evil Medical School.

STRONG LATE-GAME FINISHERS

In fact, all of the above-mentioned decks saw play at the PC due to the fact that each is centralized around a strong late game. Fending off Magneto's rise on turn seven, Common Enemy drops Silver Surfer, Evil Medical School launches a horde of holograms, and Gamma Doom just blows everything up.

SYSTEM FAILURE

Because it's not the broken card Overload was, it received nary a glance from most players, but those who did run it at the PC found it to be a great tool in the environment. A favorite of the only undefeated contender on day one, Aaron Weis, it was able to stop oversized Mark Vs and Nimrod from getting key stuns through Bastion abuse.



SQUADRON SUPREME

The Squadron's no-hand strategy could easily lock a win by turn five, and even if the Squadron couldn't seal the deal until turn six and lost control of the board, Golden Archer was always standing at the ready to deal those last few points of burn.

ENDURANCE GAIN

Curve Sentinels can only win on turn seven if the opponent has been steadily losing endurance. Several players were able to exploit that very obvious fact by running a Green Lantern build based on abusing Katma Tui's effect. Again, this was a strategy that played to the late game, dropping Onslaught or Anti-Monitor for the win.

DIRECT STUN

Sentinels runs no recovery tricks, relies on a small pool of characters and doesn't have the ability to hide from targeted effects like some of the game's newer teams. A deck like Both Guns Blazing wrecks the Sentinels, dismantling their normally strong mid-game without ever getting into a single fight.

CONCEALED HATE

Cards like No Man Escapes the Manhunters gives a player the option to either deal with a Hound early on if they don't have control of the game or leave the Hound for later and suck it into play on a turn when formation prevents it from being reinforced.

NULL TIME ZONE

Yes, you can call Null Time Zone's target as Reconstruction Program and make the opponent drop all of his or her Bastion pumps early on, but there's more to it. Because Curve Sents is so dependent on its matchup-specific tech, you can Null the card that they're likely hoping to hurt you with.

OUT FOR 'JUSTICE'

MORE 'VS. SYSTEM' RULES RIDDLES REGARDING DC'S MOST POWERFUL SET

1. I control Connor Hawke and my opponent controls Beast, Dr. Henry McCoy, and Abra Kadabra. I flip Monitor Womb Station naming Plasma Blast. My opponent attacks Connor Hawke with Abra Kadabra, then uses Abra Kadabra's power to KO Beast and move Abra Kadabra to the hidden area. Can he play Plasma Blast?

- A. Yes. Plasma Blast no longer costs 1.
- B. No. Once Plasma Blast is named for Station, it can no longer be played.
- C. You cannot name Plasma Blast for Monitor Womb Station.
- D. No. Common decency prevents cards named Womb and Plasma Blast from appearing at the same table.

C. Beast doesn't change the cost of Plasma Blast, he just reduces how much of that cost you have to pay.

2. I control Black Panther. I attack my opponent directly and play Call Down the Lightning, replacing a facedown Maxima. Does Black Panther get +3 DEF?

- A. Yes. Maxima's power works from the KO'd pile.
- B. Yes. Maxima's power works while being replaced.
- C. No. Maxima's power does not work in the KO'd pile.
- D. Yes. But only if Maxima said: "Here, kitty, kitty."

B. The first part of replacing a resource is to reveal it. Revealed resources have their powers.

3. I attack Iron Man, Avenger in Disguise, with Ultra-Humanite and both are stunned. Do I gain control of Iron Man?

- A. Yes. The game uses the information from before they were stunned.
- B. No. Moving Iron Man does not change his controller.
- C. No. Ultra-Humanite's willpower is 0.
- D. It depends on whether Stark has been drinking.

A. Powers triggered by stunning look back at the moment before the stun occurred to see if they could trigger.

4. I control a visible Martian Manhunter and Dr. Destiny. I also control a hidden Illusionary Warriors. On which characters can I play Matter Convergence?

- A. Dr. Destiny only.
- B. Dr. Destiny and Illusionary Warriors.
- C. Dr. Destiny, Illusionary Warriors and Martian Manhunter.
- D. "Matter Convergence"? Is this Vs. or Physics 101?

C. Characters with concealed—optional are concealed characters. It doesn't matter which area the character is in.

5. My opponent plays Sorcerer's Treasure target-



STUMPER of the MONTH

My opponent and I are at justice reference. I control a stunned Mageddon and he controls two stunned Dr. Sivanas. Does my opponent lose the game?

Yes. The first Sivana does not recover the other. Mageddon's power will trigger when Sivana #2 is KO'd.

ing Straight to the Grave. I want to Fizzle Straight to the Grave's effect. When can I play Fizzle to cancel it?

- A. Before he plays it.
- B. After it's on the chain, but before the trigger removes it from the game.
- C. After the trigger removing it from the game resolves.
- D. Better pay attention. We're being tricky on this one.

B and C. You can only target Straight From the Grave while it's an effect. Once the effect is on the chain, if the card is removed, the effect is still there.

6. I control Henry King, Sinister Psionic, and Mark Desmond. My opponent controls Ahab and Maxwell Lord. I play Divided We Fall. What do I choose when Divided We Fall resolves?

- A. The target only.
- B. Which character to stun.
- C. The target and which character to stun.
- D. Whether you want to be "sinister," or merely mischievous.

B. I choose targets when I announce the plot twist. Everything else is chosen when the effect resolves.

7. I control Myrwhydd, Quake-master and two facedown Path of Destructions. I attack my opponent directly with Quake-master. I flip Path of Destruction targeting Quakemaster. In response, I KO that Path of Destruction to play Myrwhydd's power. Still in response, I

flip the other Path of Destruction targeting Quakemaster. What is his ATK?

- A. 10 ATK.
- B. 11 ATK.
- C. 13 ATK.
- D. 0 ATK. You didn't say, "Simon says."

C. Path of Destruction checks on resolution. When a card changes zones, it's no longer the same card.

8. I control Gypsy and Plastic Man. I recruit Superman, Avatar Of Peace, in a position adjacent to Gypsy but not Plastic Man. I play Grounded on both Gypsy and Plastic Man. Then I play Burn Rubber, moving Plastic Man adjacent to Superman. Do Gypsy or Plastic Man have flight?

- A. Both have flight.
- B. Gypsy has flight.
- C. Neither has flight.
- D. Plas does, but he caught it during a wild night with Stretch Armstrong.

C. Superman's timestamp was set when he came into play, so grounded is applied after Superman's power. ■ Mitchell Waldbauer



ARSENAL OF LIGHT In Both Guns Blazing, your weenies allow your nukes, like the Doc and Arsenal, to unload big attacks.

MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

IQ PROVIDES FOUR DECKS FOR THE ULTIMATE SUPERHERO SMACKDOWN

You think you're the master of kung fu, the world's mightiest mortal or the best there is at what you do? Think again. You may have mastered every *Vs. System* deck known to man and kicked butt at every tournament ever. But how good are you at multiplayer? Multiplayer *Vs.* doesn't get much play, but it should 'cuz it opens the game up to a new world of threats and possibilities. To get you started on the path, we came up with four decks balanced for multiplayer mayhem.

BOTH GUNS BLAZING

This version of player Sam Roads' stunning machine is particularly good in multiplayer for a few reasons. First up, it uses A Child Named Valeria, which is incredibly valuable if you're playing in a free-for-all where anyone can attack anyone else. Often a game of multiplayer *Vs.* just comes down to politics: You try to be the double team-er, instead of the eventual double team-ee. A Child Named Valeria is basically a global effect, and makes you impervious to attack regardless of how many people have you on their "to whack" list.

So, the deck defends itself well in a format where defense is pre-

VS. MULTIPLAYER DECK

BREAKDOWN 20 R, 20 U, 20 C

THREAT LEVEL 8 Bullets and broads

THE DECK Both Guns Blazing

CHARACTERS

- 4 Alfred Pennyworth, Faithful Friend
- 1 Ape X, Xina
- 4 Dagger, Child of Light
- 1 Dr. Light, Arthur Light
- 2 Dr. Light, Master of Holograms
- 1 Garth-Tempest, Atlantean Sorcerer
- 2 Invisible Woman, The Invisible Girl
- 4 Micro-Chip, Linus Lieberman
- 2 Mikado and Mosha, Angels of Destruction
- 2 Mr. Fantastic, Reed Richards
- 1 Roy Harper - Arsenal, Sharpshooter
- 1 Shimmer, Selinda Flinders
- 4 A Child Named Valeria

- 4 Bat-Signal
- 4 Cosmic Radiation
- 2 Fizzle
- 4 Midnight Sons
- 4 Millennium
- 4 Press The Attack
- 1 Signal Flare
- 4 Wild Ride

EQUIPMENT

- 1 Catcher's Mitt
- 2 Utility Belt
- 1 War Wagon

PLOT TWISTS

- 4 A Child Named Valeria

red text = rare card

cious, but what else does it do? Both Guns Blazing seeks to use a horde of small characters to fuel direct stun effects from Roy Harper - Arsenal, Sharpshooter, and Dr. Light, Arthur Light, allowing each to stun a very large character. Cosmic Radiation then allows these activated effects to be reused, and also allows your little fellas to pack double the gunpowder into Arsenal's arm-cannons.

Direct stun is a powerful commodity to control in multiplayer. Even in a format where you've agreed on a limited attack range, say, "each player can only attack to their left," you'll be able to dish out stuns anywhere. That means you can stave off potential threats, punish a game-winning effect across the table, and even do favors for your potential allies. Soften up a victim and a vicious player might prefer the easy prey over you. Save another from a monstrous attack and you'll have an ally for life ... or at least until the next game rolls around.

For that reason, this deck runs way more Press the Attacks than would be considered standard. Just team up with your Midnight Sons engine, Valeria when needed and use your stunning power like the currency it is!

SWARM SWATTER

Want to play some three, four or more-way but don't want to break the bank? Avengers are the heroes of choice for the current environment then, and this deck is no exception. While swarm

VS. MULTIPLAYER DECK

BREAKDOWN 6 R, 20 U, 34 C

THREAT LEVEL 8 Marvel's mightiest

THE DECK Swarm Swatter

CHARACTERS

- 4 Beast, Furry Blue Scientist
- 4 Black Panther, T'challa
- 4 Carol Danvers - Warbird, Galactic Adventurer
- 4 Dane Whitman - Black Knight, Heroic Paladin
- 4 Hawkeye, Clinton Barton
- 4 Hercules, Son of Zeus
- 4 Natasha Romanoff - Black Widow, Super Spy
- 4 Quicksilver, Mutant Avenger
- 4 Rick Jones, A Hero's Best Friend



- 4 She-Hulk, Gamma Bombshell
- 4 Wonder Man, Simon Williams

PLOT TWISTS

- 4 Call Down the Lightning
- 4 Flame Trap
- 4 Heroes in Reserve
- 2 No Man Escapes the Manhunters

LOCATIONS

- 2 Avengers Mansion

mechanics are very powerful in this format because they make you harder to cripple—consolidating your drops into big characters is risky in multiplayer—this deck seeks to punish the little guys. Its key method of doing so is Flame Trap, and if you thought it was good when it was blowing away three or four characters, prepare to be amazed at how many it can off when you and your closest half-dozen friends throw down together.

Flame Trap stuns every two-drop and one-drop character on the board, and can really cause some mayhem if you're competing in a field full of swarm decks. While A Child Named Valeria versus Flame Trap can be complicated in a regular match, just wait until you see how crazy things get when several people are chaining Valerias and Traps.

This is basically a standard Avengers reservist deck, adapted for budget and the format. You want to always play your characters to your resource row, which is drastically different from other decks. Hawkeye and Black Widow allow you to divide your stun power across multiple players, so be sure to think before shooting. The Widow is particularly impressive, in that she can take down multiple three-drops on the third turn. If one player misses his three but two hit it, you can easily dominate the field by stunning both and being the only person with a three-drop.

Hercules is disgusting in this format: Attacking one player twice is good, but attacking two, one time each is incredible. He allows you to clinch games and neutralize players that would otherwise threaten your stranglehold on the game, and that's invaluable.

ELECTION IN A TINY TOWN

VS. MULTIPLAYER DECK

BREAKDOWN **21 R, 14 U, 25 C**

THREAT LEVEL **8 Gotham's goonsquad**

Again working off the hyper-complicated theory that "Valeria = good,"

this deck seeks an alternate win condition in order to disenfranchise the opponent from the entire gaming process.

Like Both Guns Blazing, we've got the necessary infrastructure for the Child Named Valeria engine: four copies of the plot twist and the characters to match. It uses a pile of team-ups to unite the Fantastic Four, Gotham Knights and Arkham Inmates, and then swarms with tiny characters: It doesn't matter how big each conspirator is so long as they can hold a ballot, after all.

This deck has been closely modeled after examples more than a year old, but the differences are notable. Lacuna makes it far easier to team up your characters, providing you with a source of Marvel Team-Ups as well as automatically joining your mischief by becoming close friends with the rest of your characters as soon as she hits the table. Catcher's Mitt is also new, and really fits the multiplayer format. Though A Child Named Valeria can stave off stuns, it can't always block all the necessary breakthrough damage. This

is especially true once all the other players realize what you're doing and that you're going to win by turn five if they don't stop you from doing it. The Mitt costs a resource point to equip, but if you protect it well, it becomes a one-turn cost that can keep you around for ages.

You'll want your characters to be ready whenever possible, so if you start a turn with control of the initiative, think twice before you start attacking. There's really little reason to be aggressive. Don't start activating characters to generate tokens too early, either. Without the option to reinforce, you could get gang-smacked right out of the game.

S-BOMB

Another deck that tries to claim victory via an alternate win

condition, this thing is just plain frustrating. It uses Katma Tui and plenty of characters that are high up in the willpower department to generate boatloads of extra endurance.

Even if two players decide to team up on you, they're going to have a hard time bringing you down because you can easily gain an extra 20 to 30 endurance over the course of a game.

Basically, this deck seeks to stall. It's unique though, because traditional stall cards like Puppet Master and Mystical Paralysis can't slow down multiple players enough to survive in this format. While this deck has tons of exhaustion thanks to Rain of Acorns, its strength lies in the fact that it just won't die. Katma Tui generates big endurance swings. Helping Hands, Cover Fire and naturally large backsides keep attackers bouncing off your characters. And on top of that, Rise from the Grave ensures that your key characters stick around: you can certainly afford the endurance cost.

Nowhere is Rise more important than when you go for the win on turn seven. With all that willpower hanging around, you'll be able to recruit Sinestro, Enemy of the Corps, and start evicting people from the game. If you can't rub out all of your opponents in such a way, then your turn-six pick, Kyle Rayner, can be recruited with boost to stall for turn eight. That frees you up to drop Onslaught on turn nine, and his global effect will have you thinking you've created your own Crisis on Infinite Earths. Meanwhile you'll still be gaining endurance, and you'll have plenty of characters with flight to pick apart Onslaught's leftovers.

But of course, if you play carefully you'll never get to that point. Try for the win with Sinestro. Alternate win conditions take the guesswork out of multiplayer, and Sinestro's effect is one of the best!

■ Jason Grabher-Meyer

HOLD THAT APPLE STILL SON, DADDY'S DRUNK.

GIVE 'EM THE SHAFT Avengers such as Hawkeye and Black Widow are ideal since they allow you to split attacks between multiple players.

THE DECK Election in a Tiny Town

CHARACTERS

- 4 Alfred Pennyworth, Faithful Friend
- 1 Ant Man, Scott Lang
- 7 GCPD Officer, Army
- 4 Harley Quinn, Dr.

Harleen Quinzel

- 4 Invisible Woman, The Invisible Girl
- 4 Lacuna, Media Darling
- 4 Mr. Fantastic, Reed Richards
- 1 Query & Echo, Double Trouble
- 1 Ratcatcher, Otis Flannegan
- 1 Ventriloquist - Scarface, Arnold Wesker

PLOT TWISTS

- 4 A Child Named Valeria
- 4 Bat Signal
- 4 Cosmic Radiation
- 4 Fizzle
- 4 Marvel Team-Up
- 2 Rigged Elections
- 2 Signal Flare
- 2 World's Finest

EQUIPMENT

- 3 Catcher's Mitt

THE DECK S-Bomb

CHARACTERS

- 4 Dr. Light, Master of Holograms
- 4 G'Nort, Green Lantern of G'Newt
- 4 Katma Tui, Green Lantern of Korugar
- 4 Kyle Rayner, Ion
- 4 Kyle Rayner, Last Green Lantern
- 4 Malvolio, Lord of the Green Flame

- 3 Olapet, Green Lantern of Southern Goldstar
- 2 Salakk, Green Lantern of Slyggia
- 2 Sinestro, Enemy of the Corps
- 1 Sinestro, Green Lantern of Korugar

PLOT TWISTS

- 4 Cover Fire
- 1 Emerald Dawn
- 4 Helping Hands



- 3 Rain of Acorns
- 3 Rise from the Grave
- 4 The Ring Has Chosen

EQUIPMENT

- 1 Catcher's Mitt
- 2 Light Armor



ASSEMBLING THE AVENGERS

MARVEL'S HOTTEST HEROES HIT 'HEROCLIX' WITH IQ'S HELPING HAND

If you're anything like the guys around our office, you often get an itch you just can't scratch when it comes to *HeroClix*—and not because you've got some kind of weird rash. No, it's because if you're anything like us, your head just about explodes when you get all set to play your favorite team to find that only half of it is available.

What's a hardcore player to do? Make your own figures, of course. With several members of Marvel's hottest superteam, the New Avengers, debuting in *Armor Wars*, we decided to fill out that last spot on our own... Though if you're after a Luke Cage in more current dress, smacking an old *Infinity Challenge* Thug on Luke's base brings him more or less up to date.



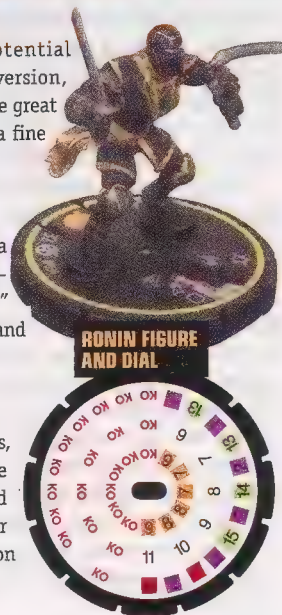
NOT YOUR DADDY'S AVENGERS WizKids hasn't put some of the new team on the Avengers yet, but you certainly can.

1. SPIDER-MAN

Mutant Mayhem. We went with the potential willpower/outwit combo offered by this version, though for sheer variety of powers—and some great close combat expert—*Armor Wars*' figure is a fine substitute.

2. RONIN

InQuest's own. The new and mysterious ninja Avenger—who's actually Echo from *Daredevil*—is all about martial arts. So we loaded "him" up with a buttload of close combat expert and combat reflexes.



3. IRON MAN

Armor Wars. Aside from his monstrous defenses, running shot is one of the best powers in the game—especially when you mix it with ranged combat expert. And a couple clicks of willpower on the back end of his dial to get into position with outwit is not bad for a final click.

4. SENTRY

Armor Wars. At 211 points, he's nearly a team unto himself, so he might not make the cut in smaller point battles. Still, he's the tank the New Avengers need.

5. CAPTAIN AMERICA

Armor Wars. Perplex, exploit weakness and outwit make Cap the perfect leader for this team. One slot of impervious up front in the vet ensures he'll be around to use 'em for a while.

6. CAGE

Fantastic Forces. Luke may not be up to Sentry's level, but his veteran fig costs about half as much. Pure and simple, this brick exists to smack foes around with super strength. We just snapped the old dial on our custom ghetto-ized figure.

7. WOLVERINE

Universe. We were after stealth, but if you're bloodthirsty, go with *Clobberin' Time's* Logan. His flurry/claws/battle fury combo is guaranteed to carve up bad guys.

8. SPIDER-WOMAN

Armor Wars. With heavy hitters such as Sentry and Iron Man around, think about the possible uses for her pulse wave against weaker adversaries, rather than just diving into combat with her different expertises.

■ Brent Fishbaugh



HeroClix™ & © WizKids. Custom figures by Brian Schomburg.

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING ARTIST ICON KEITH PARKINSON



PARKINSON

Fantasy artist Keith Parkinson passed away due to complications from leukemia on October 26, 2005, four days after his 47th birthday, after battling the disease for more than a year. There are precious few artists in gaming who can claim what Parkinson could. With fellow fantasy pioneers such as Larry Elmore, Clyde Caldwell, Fred Fields and Brom, he transformed the visuals of *Dungeons & Dragons* from amateurish black-and-white scribbles to lush art of dragons of every color and liches in every state of decay. Whether the topic was a new type of draconian or thieves skulking in the shadows, Parkinson's subjects leapt off the canvas with a realism unmatched in fantasy art.

After five years shaping the artistic path of *D&D*, Parkinson moved into freelance art, working his personal magic on book covers for fantasy and sci-fi authors like Terry Brooks, David Eddings, Anne McCaffrey, Orson Scott Card and Terry Goodkind. But he was not done with gaming.

In 1995, the heyday of CCGs, Parkinson and designer Luke Peterschmidt partnered with FPG to produce *Guardians*, which featured some of the most vibrant and imaginative art—and hottest babes—in the history of collectible card games. In 1999, he created the original package art for *EverQuest*, and the unmistakable visage of Firiona Vie will always be linked to him. Most recently, he had taken up the role of art director for Sigil Games Online.

Parkinson will be missed, but his influence in both the gaming world and the one beyond will be felt forever. ■ *IQ staff*

'HORSEMAN NEAR LAKE'

"Keith was a fantastic artist. Painting just seemed to come easier to him than most. Back in the TSR days, I used his illustrations as reference. I had to stash them whenever he'd stop by the art department for a game of darts."

—Fred Fields



'EVERQUEST'

Parkinson was the artistic visionary behind the initial *EverQuest* packaging. He was the talent behind the initial box art and the following two expansions for the game. Every brushstroke is immediately recognizable as Parkinson's.



'GREAT RED DRAGON'

"Keith was an ambitious and talented artist who developed into one of the top fantasy illustrators in the field. He had a wonderful sense of color, and I was often in awe of his lush, intricately painted backgrounds."

—Clyde Caldwell



'LORD SOTH'S CHARGE'

More than any other artist, Parkinson's vision defined the countenance of Kryn's most malevolent *Dungeons & Dragons* villain. His work captures the darkness that lies behind the helm.

OF KOBOLDS & DORITOS

ONE MAN'S ADVENTURE AT WORLDWIDE 'D&D' GAME DAY

If adventure has a name, it must be *Dungeons & Dragons*.

I decided that on November 5th, I must screw my courage to the sticking place and go forth to take part in *D&D* Game Day. Not only would I finally learn to play that new *3.5 Edition* that I've heard so much about (Lord, whatever happened to THACO? I feel so old.), I'll also have an excuse to escape the wife's ban on my long-denied junk food addiction.

10:44 AM I'm up (and earlier than usual for a Saturday) and off to game. With notebook and dice at the ready, I mount my faithful ride and "Hi Ho Geo, Away!" I set out to Ravenstone Games in Columbus, Ohio (Go Bucks).

11:20 AM My first stop is at a convenience store. I will need provisions for this journey, so I purchase a 12-pack of Mountain Dew and a supersized bag of Doritos. The fates have smiled upon me.

11:50 AM I arrive at Ravenstone and seek to enlist in the next round of combat. The augury was wrong! The event began at 11! The shopkeep assures me that another session will begin in a few hours. I choose to dally and play the *Arkham Horror* board game.

5:01 PM Time to dice! Dungeon Master Mike produces a stack of papers. They're character sheets. With pregenerated characters for us to play. Four other players will share my fate for good or ill, and when the DM mentions that there's only one each of the four conventional classes (fighter, cleric, wizard and rogue) the other players snatch the sheets faster than a hasted halfling. I get the leftovers.

5:15 PM I'm a 4th-level kobold wizard. A kobold? I played old-school *AD&D* (it was called "advanced" back then, you whippersnappers) in high school, but am not savvy with the latest *D&D* 3.5 rules. John, the player beside me who had seized the rogue's character sheet, hits the highlights for me.

5:45 PM Our party's job? A remote village is being harassed by evil dark elves. Dark elves—gotta hate 'em. Some of the local priests ask us to do what we can to end their threat. They also ask us to keep an eye out for two of their fellow priests who are missing and for a lost religious artifact.

6:12 PM I drain Mountain Dew number five, and each of us players places his miniature on a square at the entrance portion of the map. The DM gently reminds us that our characters don't have this map and can't see everything depicted. What our characters do see are dark, stone—cut passages, covered in spider webs and faintly illuminated by methodically placed glowing orbs. I imagine the musty smells of attics and old folks' homes. I finally decide upon my character's name—"Sparky."

7 PM Our party is making steady progress through the dungeon, but still no sign of the missing priests. The first danger we encounter is a bunch of poisonous spiders. I learn my spells suck against spiders. We exhaust our supply of acid vials but splash our way to victory with minimal damage.

7:23 PM Our second encounter is worse. A barbarian attacks, and we receive our first fatality: A pair of critical hits strikes down Lyco, the gnome cleric. "Good luck surviving without a cleric," Lyco's player Nick scoffs.

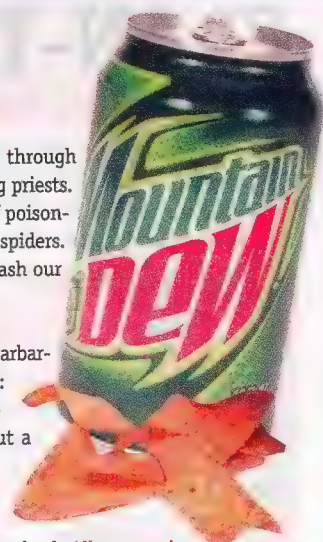
8:07 PM Mountain Dew can number nine drops at my feet as we find the two priests, dead. All my magic missiles and scorching rays have been spent killing dark elf assassins. I urge my companions to leave the dungeon and come back later.

8:20 PM We find the holy rock of Pelor, which can miraculously invoke daylight ... as well as two troglodytes who are the gravest threat our adventurers ever faced.

Fighter Frank was soaking up most of the damage ... until Frank's player James realized that the "iron will" feat isn't the one that lets you operate at negative hit points, and Frank dropped dead. I thought we were through. Sparky was tempted to bolt, but John persuaded me that my wizard would be wiped out if he tried. John's rogue Gnat urged Sparky to attack, which would allow Gnat to tumble and flank the last trog.

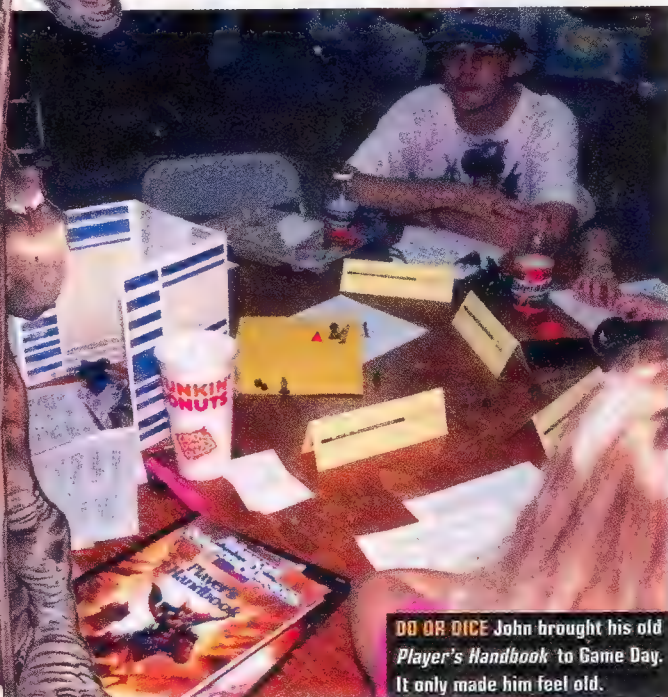
I couldn't hit. Nor could I withstand the 23 points of damage inflicted by the monster, and Sparky's spark went black. But Gnat was able to bring the troglodyte down. We won ... in a manner of speaking.

9:02 PM The rock is returned, the dead buried and rewards gathered. DM Mike gives each of us a Drow Assassin figure to keep as well. As I pop open my last Dew and head for the door, I eye the various rulebooks for edition 3.5 and make some notes to update my wish list on Amazon.com. ■ John Bryan



I PREFER MR. PIBB.

TROGLODYTE



DO OR DICE John brought his old *Player's Handbook* to Game Day. It only made him feel old.

CLAN-TASTIC!

THE GREATEST PERSONALITIES IN THE HISTORY OF 'LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS'

While *Legend of the Five Rings* is primarily a matter of battles and honor, the samurai and shugenja are at the heart of the game. They might not lead every encounter or fight every duel, but they are the faces of the clans and figure into the deadliest decks, the path

of the storyline and more.

But who's the best when it comes to each clan? Who's the most important and most fearsome in the history of Rokugan? Funny you should ask...



HIDA TENSU, CRAB
Gold Edition

What happens when you take a berserker with no honor requirement and a near 1-to-1 force-to-gold ratio and cram him into a deck with a whole pile of free gold holdings? You get the makings of pretty much the best Crab deck since *Imperial*. Forget about playing Hida 'n' Seek with this bruiser.



KAN'OK'TICHECK, MANTIS
Gold Edition

By the world championships at Gen Con 2003, most of the best decks featured Kan'ok'ticheck. The eventual winner, Bryan Reese, used the White Rat to simultaneously accelerate his personality output and maintain a considerable force lead over his opponents. Now if foes could only pronounce his name...



KAKITA SHIJIN, CRANE
Annul of Despair

There's a reason why a large portion of the player base spits at the mere mention of a Crane winning a tournament. This poet's ability was used to rocket towards an honor victory as Cranes worldwide continuously sacrificed the Ki-Rin. We don't, however, know if iambic pentameter was involved.



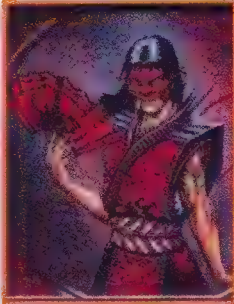
SHIBA NINGEN, PHOENIX
Honor Bound

Phoenix decks have always needed one thing: dirt-cheap shugenja. At five gold, the benefit of boosting the dynasty flow of any deck is obvious, but in the boxable-heavy Phoenix Clan, this advantage is amplified. The only thing holding this guy back is his two personal honor—but honor doesn't help summon more oni.



HOSHI CHUICHI, DRAGON
Fall of Otosan Uchi

The Dragon Clan is often referred with the axiom "gifted in all, best at nothing" ... except when they flip turn-two Hoshi Chuichi. His trait synergized perfectly with the force-pumping kihos that Dragon decks employed, and up until *Lotus*, this one monk was able to destroy multiple provinces on turn three.



BAYUSHI KWANCHAI, SCORPION
Gold Edition

Yogo Towers allows any Scorpion, no matter how small, to negate any other unit, no matter how large. With a dueling meta reaction tacked on, no other Scorpion contributed to Corrupt Scorpion's success more than this Master of Bitter Lies.



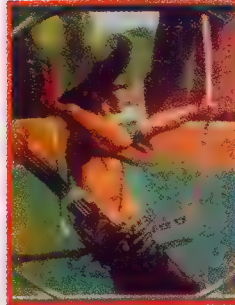
MATSU GOHEI, LION
Imperial Edition

Three force for two gold with three personal honor to boot. Even in a clan known for its efficient personalities, Matsu Gohei stands out as one of the best in the game. When players sit around and talk about "the good old days," they tend to conveniently forget about this guy; he was just that good.



ONI NO AKUMA, SHADOWLANDS
Imperial Edition

This guy was crushing Crane provinces turn two, which places him alongside Matsu Gohei in the "conveniently forgotten" file. Rumor on the street is that Daigotsu, who's a little short on allies, has turned to the Oni Lord of Tongues for help. So look out, 'cause this guy is coming back.



TSURUCHI ETSUI, MANTIS
Web of Lies

Though Etsui is a relative freshman in this group, he's a powerhouse compared to his clan mates. As a Great Clan, Mantis was a joke—until *Web of Lies*. A new mechanic brought new success: Raiding elevated the Mantis to a dominating position, and Etsui's "lockdown" ability was the reason.



OTAKU KAMOKO, UNICORN
Imperial Edition

Four force, three personal honor and cavalry all for only the price of bowing your stronghold... Apart from Matsu Gohei and Oni no Akuma, no personality holds a candle to the raw efficiency of Otaku Kamoko. If Unicorn was able to create a second attack phase, Kamoko would be the most respected personality ever. ■ David Heron

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

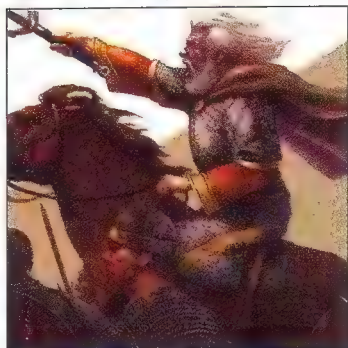
THE DEADLIEST WARRIORS GET THEIR SPURS IN 'ANACHRONISM SET 4'

Brilliant! The Irish, Maori, Persian and Russian cultures have tossed aside their Guinness, kiwi fruit, rugs and rubles and assembled to throw down against each other in *Anachronism's* new *Set 4*. In order to

showcase some of the new cards and themes, we've built a deck around the mightiest warrior from each of the *Set 4* cultures. Take a look to know your enemies at the next *Anachronism* tournament!

THE IRISH

The more, the merrier—damage, that is. Ger is a damage machine; starting at 2 damage, and increasing by one after every hit. In round one, you will almost always be able to get a swing in with Ger. As soon as you can, use Brian Ború's ability to make a second Ger attack in one round. After a swing in round one and two more in round two, Ger will be up to 5 damage, provided those attacks hit. If they did, chances are you've already defeated your opponent.



If not, Tiwaz seals the deal by giving you the first turn on round three and preventing your opponent from stealing victory with a critical hit.

Be careful of having 0 experience after you use Ború's ability. Also, strong defensive decks make your first few hits less likely and could draw out the game. You shouldn't need to worry about life gain, though, since you can almost certainly deal damage faster than they can heal.

THE MAORI

Hatupatu is the proverbial "glass cannon." With 5 life and 3 experience, your first instinct may be to use his 4 speed to run away. But with the Kotiate as your weapon, you have a 50-50 shot at getting the critical hit that will cause Hatupatu to grow into a 9-life, 9-experience wrecking ball.

If your first attack with Kotiate misses, you'll need an emergency plan. Enter Khutga. If you need to, you can discard the Khutga for 2 life, giving you a little



breathing room as you try to get that essential critical hit. Qing Gong Palace and Ast follow this plan, gaining more life as you bring your four actions to bear against the opponent each round.

Qing Gong Palace lets you get double duty out of both Ast and Khutga, or any of your opponent's discarded cards. It goes nicely with the myth of Hatupatu too, letting you outwit your enemies.

DECK LIST Irish Eyes A-Smilin'

WARRIOR

Brian Ború (Set 4)

ARMOR

Byrnies (Set 1)

INSPIRATION

Tiwaz (Set 3)

SPECIAL

Bonaid Trí-Iteagan (Set 3)

WEAPON

Ger (Set 3)

DECK LIST Maori May I?

WARRIOR

Hatupatu (Set 4)

INSPIRATION

Ast (Set 2)

SPECIAL

Qing Gong Palace (Set 2)

WEAPON

Khutga (Set 2)

Kotiate (Set 4)

THE PERSIANS

Shapur I is a cheater. His ability to use an action ability for free at the start of the round allows him to use *any* action ability—even those that cost two actions! A popular action ability is found on Carpat, and it allows you to run your opponent over and deal two damage to him in the process. Play this card in the second slot to ensure that you get adjacent to your opponent first.

Zhad deals two damage if you roll against your opponent's initiative for



the round, or three after you play the Carpat. If your opponent backs into a corner, this is a great option. Caithbheart-chuim Leathrach gives you another action at the start of the round, allowing you an early hit with Zhad or the chance to back out of your opponent's attack grid. Osiris keeps you alive in round four and beyond, but you might find games with this deck ending in success long before then. Still, the actual victory is up to you, not the gods.

THE RUSSIANS

Saint Alexander Nevsky gains additional bonuses from playing allies, and one of the best ally cards of *Set 4* is Anastasia Romanova. This little princess gives you a speed and damage bonus, but causes you a lot of grief if your opponent rolls doubles on an attack roll. Bokken is there to make sure that doesn't happen.

Heyokha—the Native American thunder cult—deals damage to opponents



that roll consecutive numbers, which Bokken may also help you set up. To close the game, the Akinaka is the first two-damage weapon that allows the use of another weapon, so you'll have lots of attacks raining down on your opponent in rounds four and five. Once that's done, you and Alex can get back to unifying Russia. And his title's not just for show, Nevsky is a recognized saint of the Russian Orthodox Church.

■ Steve McLaughlin

DECK LIST Persian Potency

WARRIOR

Shapur I (Set 4)

ARMOR

Caithbheart-chuim
Leathrach (Set 3)

INSPIRATION

Osiris (Set 2)

SPECIAL

Zhad (Set 2)
Carpat (Set 2)

DECK LIST Russian Attack

WARRIOR

Saint Alexander Nevsky (Set 4)

INSPIRATION

Anastasia Romanova (Set 4)

SPECIAL

Heyokha (Set 3)

WEAPONS

Akinaka (Set 4)
Bokken (Set 1)

'FMA' FOREVER

THE MANY VERSIONS OF EDWARD ELLIC

Even though we've only had two releases, there are already 11 leader versions of Edward Elric, the shrimpy alchemist who's part metal, part flesh, in the *Fullmetal Alchemist TCG*. But which are the best?

LEVEL 1

EDWARD ELLIC, DOG OF THE MILITARY The level 1 leader of choice just for his 6 command and the nice alchemy boost when he has an item attachment.

GRADE: A

EDWARD ELLIC, NOVICE Playing 5-command leaders is a challenge, and Novice doesn't have the text to make him worthwhile. Thumbs down. **GRADE: F**

LEVEL 2

EDWARD ELLIC, GOOD-HEARTED His resetting ability can be unbelievable, allowing for multiple battles in the same turn. **GRADE: B**

EDWARD ELLIC, MAN OF ACTION He's got 8 command and good stats, but the fact that he has to set to use his ability is unfortunate. **GRADE: D**

EDWARD ELLIC, SHRIMP He's got 8 command and huge stats against any character with more strength than him. **GRADE: A**

EDWARD ELLIC, UNBELIEVER In a wits event-heavy deck, this Edward can fight twice. He's also got balanced stats, but only 7 command. **GRADE: C**

LEVEL 3

EDWARD ELLIC, AVENGER It's tough to justify playing a 9-command level 3 Edward when Alphonse Elric, Bodyguard, is so crucial. Still, his redirecting ability and stats are nice. **GRADE: B**

EDWARD ELLIC, BODY OF THE SANCTIONED

His built-in Run, You Coward! gives the Elric player a crucial advantage at Level 3. There is no better choice in the game. **GRADE: A**

EDWARD ELLIC, OUR HERO

Literally, the only use for this version is to accelerate to Level 4, as Our Hero gets there faster than any other version. **GRADE: C**

EDWARD ELLIC, THE FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST

Even with the few additions in *Blood & Water*, there just aren't enough heroes in the game to make this Ed worthwhile.

GRADE: D

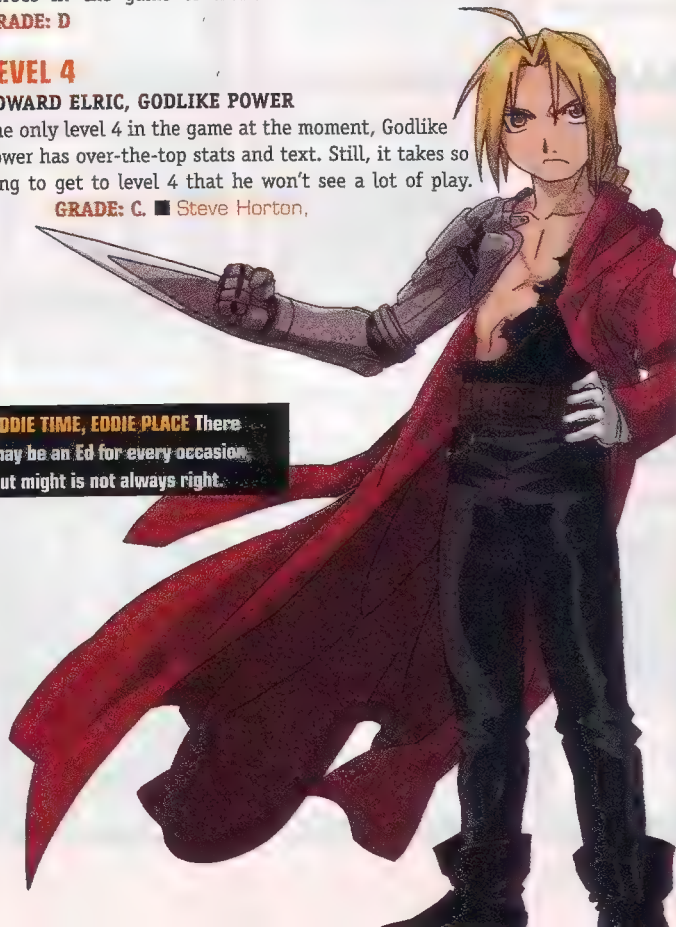
LEVEL 4

EDWARD ELLIC, GODLIKE POWER

The only level 4 in the game at the moment, Godlike Power has over-the-top stats and text. Still, it takes so long to get to level 4 that he won't see a lot of play.

GRADE: C. ■ Steve Horton,

EDDIE TIME, EDDIE PLACE There may be an 'Ed' for every occasion, but might is not always right.



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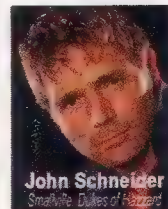
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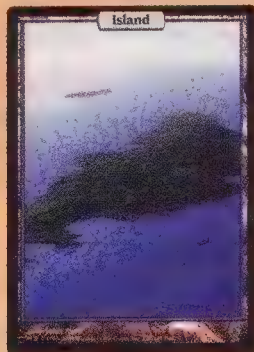
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DEAD MAN'S HAND

HELP THE WORLD'S WORST MAGIC PLAYER

You can't WIN. Eugene's *Ravnica* tour continues with a visit to the guild of tree-hugging elves and elf-hugging trees, the green/white Selesnya. There are also some humans in the guild, but you've undoubtedly heard about the earthly stereotype they embody. Suffice to say, they're all about peace, love and plants.

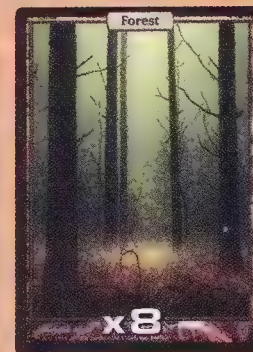
Eugene hears the end of a friendly game with hippie chick Starshine. Eugene just drew the last card from his library and it is now the beginning of his main phase. Neither player has attacked this game—that would not be friendly or peaceful—but now that it's about to end, Eugene feels unfulfilled. Sure, he's still at 20 life, but Starshine's at 421. He can't win with life, and he certainly can't win the game, but perhaps he can win with love ... or maybe saprolings. It's one of those hippie things. Be groovy and help Eugene out.

Control as many Saprolings as possible at the end of this turn; you can attack, just this once. Answer and hint on page 103.

Keep the following in mind:

- A token ceases to exist immediately after it leaves play, but still triggers leaves-play abilities like that on *Twilight Drover*.
- If attacked, Starshine will block with *Voracious Cobra*.
- Alaborn Zealot's current text is: "Whenever Alaborn Zealot blocks a creature, destroy that creature and Alaborn Zealot."

BY LEIGH NEWMARK



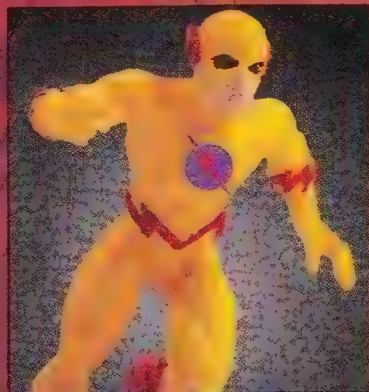
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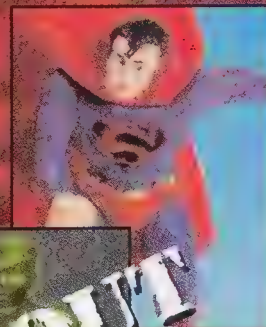
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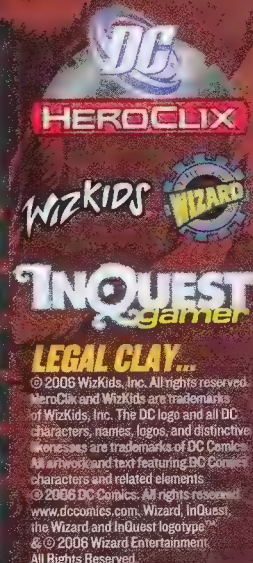
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MAGIC: THE GATHERING

'Guildpact' kicks off the year's most electrifying lineup

Dynamite, nuclear weapons and Russell Crowe locked in a room full of paparazzi are explosive; the 2006 *Magic* campaign will be revolutionary.

Ravnica kicked off the current *Magic* block at the tail end of 2005, and it was only the beginning. This year will see two more sets just like *Ravnica* and then introduce a new block with sets codenamed "Snap, Crackle and Pop," which has *Magic* Lead Designer Mark Rosewater more excited than anything else. Then there's the mysterious "lost expansion" of the *Ice Age* block, *Coldsnap*. And the things we've heard about the cards in those sets are insane, and it all starts with *Guildpact*.

We sat down with Aaron Forsythe, a designer and developer on *Guildpact* and lead designer for *Dissension*, and Assistant *Magic* Brand Manager Jake Theis to find out exactly what *Guildpact* brings to the table. New guilds, mechanics and dual lands are on the way, along with a menagerie of new creatures including spirits, thrulls, weirds and nephilim. Everything you ever wanted to know about *Guildpact* but were afraid to ask is inside, including why it's the most destructive set of all time.





RAVNICA'S STOLEN THUNDER How will Wizards of the Coast balance the sheer destructive power of *Magic's* first ever red-dominated set?

2 DISSENSION

The last set in the *Ravnica* block, *Dissension* wraps up a block that has thrived on loose ends. In the first set helmed by veteran *Magic* designer/developer Aaron Forsythe, you'll see the rest of your dual lands—not to mention the other land cycles—as well as the signets and guildmages. However, you should definitely expect some curveballs.

Where *Guildpact* had three guilds that excelled at destruction, *Dissension*'s guilds will be the blue/green Simic Combine, blue/white Azorius Senate and black/red Cult of Rakdos. Which one of these things is not like the others?

If you answered Rakdos, give your inner Elmo a tickle. They're led by a blood-hungry demon who promises more destruction than a category 19 hurricane. But the Simic and Azorius should be two of the trickiest and most subtle guilds yet. The Simic will specialize in genetic mutation, while the Azorius is a cold, calculating bureaucracy that's liable to bring Counter-Post-style control decks back to *Magic*.

TM



GOLD FEVER

"We kept the guilds—meaning the number of gold cards—the same size in both *Ravnica* and *Guildpact*," says Forsythe. "So they are much harder to ignore than they are in *Ravnica*." To put it in perspective, *Guildpact* has more gold cards per pack than either *Planeshift* or *Apocalypse*.

Guildpact is where the *Ravnica* block gets interesting. "Most of the cycles you saw in *Ravnica* are 10-card cycles that carry throughout the block," said Theis, and that means you're going to see three new guildmages, three new awesome guild leaders and a platoon of new hybrid spells as it introduces three new guilds—the blue/red Izzet, red/green Gruul Clans and the white/black Orzhov Syndicate. And those guilds equal some of the most destructive color

"This block is very different in that we don't take the mechanics of the first set and expand on them. They're gone. Convoke, dredge, all that stuff, goodbye."

—Aaron Forsythe, Magic Designer

combinations in the game. After all, this is the set that balances *Ravnica*'s red deficiency, and black/white is pretty much the ultimate non-red destruction combo. But simple destruction, or simple anything, isn't enough when you're talking about gold. Throughout the set, you'll see multicolor cards that take the vanilla mechanics you're used to and kick them up a notch.

"When you make the gold card, you can make it a little more spicy than your normal, run-of-the-mill Terrors or Shocks," says Forsythe. You can make spells like *Electrolyze*, part of a "soft cycle" of removal spells tied to Lightning Helix which Forsythe called "an old favorite brought to life in a new way: Fire and Ice. A split card combined into one potent weapon." It's not "a well-defined cycle, but we knew we liked making removal spells as good as we could make them in gold." Also expect another Vindicate-style spell like *Putrefy* from the black/white Orzhov. However, the most extreme example of cards permeated by gold will come from a new race called the nephilim.

"The nephilim are going to be the first cycle of four-colored creatures of all time," says Theis. "It might be easier to describe them as 'not green' or 'not blue.'" Older, darker deities that have awakened in *Ravnica*, each of the five nephilim costs exactly four mana of four different colors. But all of *Ravnica*'s guild-centric mana fixers—dual lands, bounce lands and signets—are back, so they might as well be four-mana artifacts.

"We had the nephilim at a ridiculous power level, but we found out 'hey, we're casting this on the third turn,'" says Forsythe. So they won't be a cycle of four-mana bringers. Instead, Theis says, "being older, kind of stylized gods, their powers are very outside of the box."

THAT NEW GUILD SMELL

"This block is very different in that we don't take the mechanics of the first set and expand on them. They're gone. Convoke, dredge, all that stuff, goodbye," says Forsythe. "Welcome three new mechanics, and we'll explore those three in



MAGIC GONE BOTH Teysa not withstanding, the Orzhov are full of minions who are, shall we say, cleansed of the flesh.

great depth." The design team calls this "holistic" design. Instead of magnifying the Golgari's dredge, Dimir's transmute or the Boros weenies, *Guildpact* introduces the Izzet, Gruul Clans and Orzhov Syndicate with strategies and mechanics all their own.

"The Izzet are very focused on casting instants and sorceries," says Forsythe. They're "a natural foil to the Gruul, which is very focused on creatures." Many of the Izzet permanents will have abilities that trigger off their controller playing noncreature spells, and the guild's keyword, "replicate," lets seemingly innocuous cards like *Shattering Spree* balloon into game breakers.

"Replicate is scalable, which means the more mana you have, the bigger the effect you can generate," says Forsythe. "It's like an X spell, except instead of just increasing damage, you're actually increasing the number of spells you're casting." Like storm, this creates a threat that can hit multiple targets and is very hard to stop with countermagic. All in all, Forsythe says, "blue/red will probably be a slower deck. We wanted it to be able to hang on until the late game when it just says 'my

spells are gonna be better than yours.' I expect blue/red to play a slow removal, counterspell type deck with a few creatures thrown in that just says 'okay we survived to turn 12, now I can tap all my mana and do some ridiculous things with all these cards I've drawn.'"

The Gruul keyword has no

such subtlety. "The Gruul are all about bringing the pain to your opponent and then benefiting from that," says Forsythe, and "bloodthirst" capitalizes on that. It's "one of the few mechanics that makes bolting your opponent the right play." The keyword only appears on creatures and is always followed by a number, which goes all the way up to X. If your opponent was dealt damage this turn, that creature comes into play with +1/+1 counters equal to its bloodthirst. The Gruul will also have plenty of ways to force damage through, including trample and pingers.

If you're not a fan of red's direct damage and aggression, there's only one guild for you in *Guildpact*, the Orzhov. "They're kind of mob and church rolled into one," says Theis of the very Goth-like Orzhov. Their keyword is haunt.

"Haunt is playing up the gothic, religious, spiritual side of the black/white guild," says Forsythe. When you play a noncreature spell with haunt, it takes effect, but instead of going into the graveyard, you remove it from the game haunting a target creature in play; this aspect works like *Mirrodin's* imprint. When the haunted creature is put into a graveyard, your spell activates again. Some Orzhov creatures with comes-into-play abilities will carry the keyword as well, triggering those abilities a second time when the haunted target goes to the grave. All in all, it's a nasty guild to play against.

"The white/black deck is definitely the middle one [speed-wise]. That's one of the things we tried to do when we designed it," said Forsythe. The

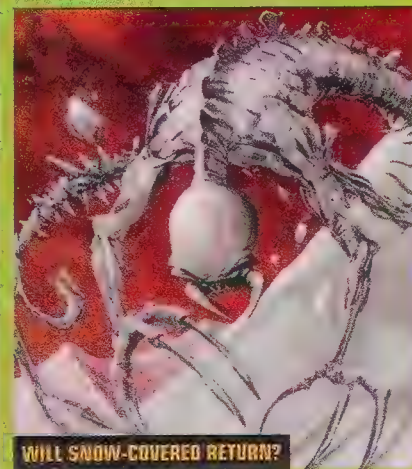
Orzhov mage "should be playing sort of the aggro/control deck. He'll have creatures that do amazing things. He'll have removal," and a lot of other powerful cards. When you put it all together, that turns into one vicious deck. "If you play a bunch of the Orzhov cards together, you end up with something we call the bleeder deck. It just ties you up in knots, stops you from doing what you're trying to do, and then it just starts draining you down from there... Point here, point there, slow you down, stop you, generate some slow, grinding advantage and over time you just wither away."

COLDSNAP

July 21
The New Theme Deck

Since Wizards started releasing expansions in three-set blocks, only reprint-focused base sets have disrupted that flow. But right after *Dissension*, in the dead space before the next block begins, a stand-alone, tournament-legal expansion will add 155 new cards to the mix with mechanics and themes that haven't been seen in nearly a decade. And those cards will remain standard-legal until the "Snap" block rotates out two years later.

"*Coldsnap* will revisit *Ice Age* mechanically and creatively," says Mark Rosewater, *Magic* lead designer. It is not a lost design file from the time of *Ice Age*, as initially reported, but the current *Magic* design team adding a capstone to the incomplete block made of *Ice Age* and *Alliances* with an eye toward improving some under-realized mechanics like snow-covered lands. Of course, this also lets them play with some really broken themes like alternate play costs (i.e., Force of Will). And we're all wondering what cards will be reprinted in the four *Ice Age* block theme decks to be released with *Coldsnap*. TM



ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

Like *Ravnica*, *Guildpact* is chock full of throw-back cards, and the Orzhov lead the way with the return of thrulls.

"Think of them as servants of the wealthy," says Theis. The Orzhov have a definite "pecking order; the Thrulls are in the basement of that." And since guild matters more than color in *Ravnica*, for the first time ever you'll see a nonblack thrull. But where there's a bottom, there's also a top. And for the Orzhov, the top is their ruling Ghost Council. "To illustrate their wealth and opulence," says Theis, when guild members die, "they kind of graduate into immortality." In a nod to *Kamigawa*, it also happens to be a legendary spirit, which Forsythe says, "are a big creature type in black/white." And iconic Orzhov creature types don't end there: "Historically, black and white have had some great fliers," says Forsythe, particularly "angels, starting with Selenia, Dark Angel,

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP

"We have the solution to following the multicolor block," says Mark Rosewater about what they have in store for the "Snap, Crackle and Pop" block that kicks off with the year-end release. They're very aware that *Odyssey* block, which followed multicolor *Invasion*, was one of the least popular blocks from the last five years. They don't plan to let that happen to the next block, whose sets are codenamed Snap, Crackle and Pop. "Ravnica is us making some departures," says Rosewater, referring to the "holistic" design philosophy that spread 10 keyword mechanics throughout the entire block rather than expanding on the base set. "Snap will be holistic in a completely new way."

The rotation forced by Snap's release will also mark the first Standard format completely developed during Rosewater's tenure as lead designer. His emphasis has been on making blocks work together so Standard and Extended

and Desolation Angel, and we figured this is something people are going to want, and we can deliver here again." The dark angel theme continues with our cover girl, Angel of Despair, who's a far cry from the Boros angel Razia. One thing not to expect from this guild, though, are weenies. Despite white weenie and suicide black being two classic archetypes, Forsythe says the Orzhov are "not a particularly fast guild."

"One way we like to show how the guilds are different from one another is by taking a common element and putting it through that [guild] filter," says Forsythe. This comes out in many of the iconic creature types, like angels and goblins. With red in common, both the Izzet and Gruul have their own breed of goblin. "The goblins in the blue/red guild are the fun little lab rat goblins who are in the lab blowing things up," says Theis. "The Gruul Clan goblins are your nastier, mug-you-in-the-alley, hit-you-over-the-head-with-a-beer-bottle type of goblins." The Izzet and Gruul each have specialized forces as well.

"Weirds are pretty interesting," says Theis about a new creature type fielded by the Izzet. "They take two rival elements and put them together. A weird can be composed of an ice storm that's coursing thunder and lightning. They're kind of weird mixes." The Izzet leader is also a strange mix: a capricious dragon wizard named Niv-Mizzet



who can "win you the game without attacking," according to Forsythe.

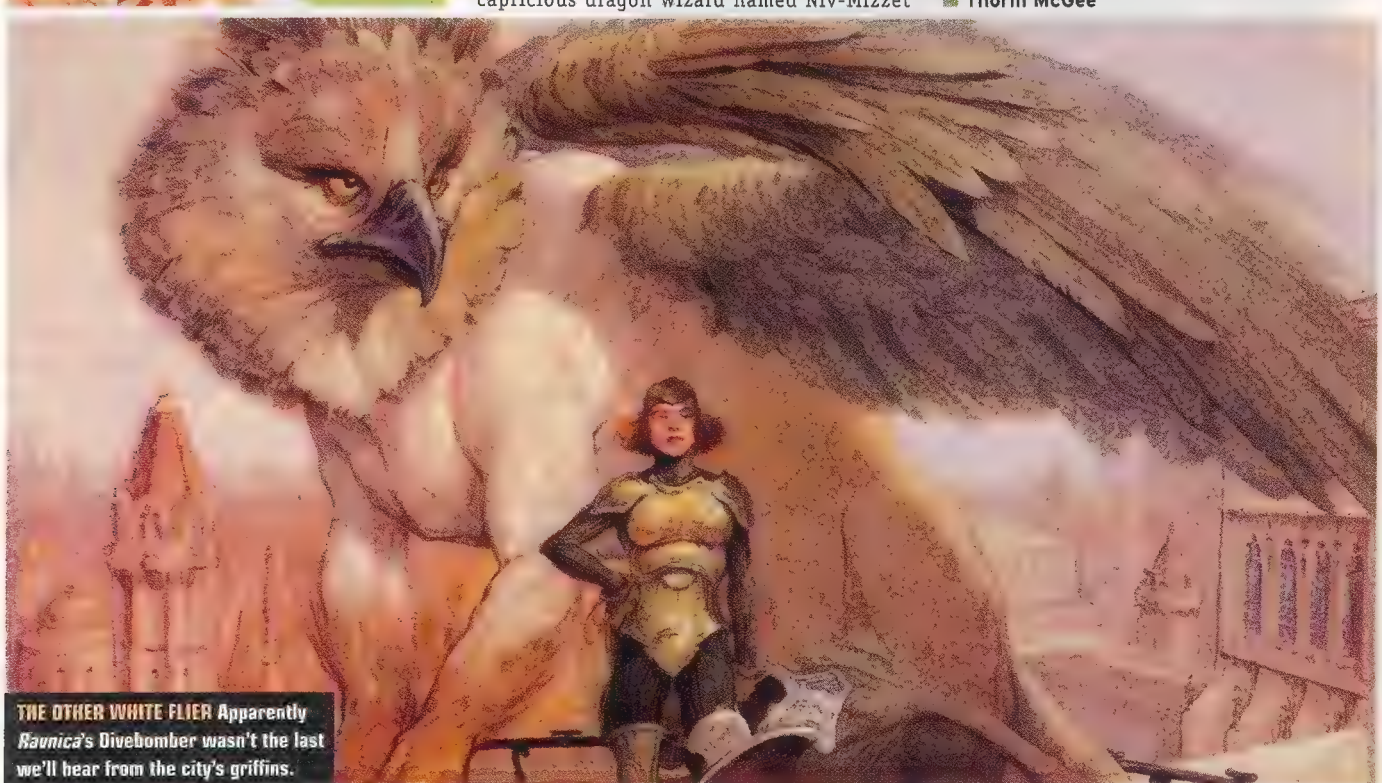
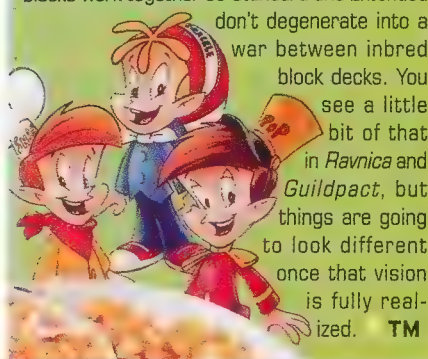
That's not something you'll see from the Gruul. "The red/green player has a simple mission: attack," says Forsythe. The Gruul leader, Borborygmus, is a cyclops who "is going to reward you for attacking with everything you have on the table." His reavers will include "a lot of bigger creatures like elementals and wurms," as well as beasts, viashino and centaurs. "We know what red/green players like to do," says Forsythe, "and we

pretty much just turned the knob up on that."

Giving the players what they want? It's been the mantra for this entire block, but look for *Guildpact* to also shake things up. "What excites me the most is taking the world of Ravnica, which has proven to be one of the most popular blocks we've ever done," said Forsythe, and throwing in "some stuff that is entirely new, and there's nothing like it in *Ravnica*, and it just fits in very well."

In closing, Forsythe said *Guildpact* is "a whole new way of going at deckbuilding. It's not written out. There's no more cards that have this keyword on it to hold your hand and tell you to put them in your deck, but we're trying to open it up a little more." And that's just the beginning of what Wizards of the Coast has in store for 2006.

Thorin McGee



THE OTHER WHITE FLIER Apparently Ravnica's Divebomber wasn't the last we'll hear from the city's griffins.

5 MAGIC ONLINE 3.0

Computerized cards and a judge that's never wrong rule over *Magic's* newest digital domain

Next time your friend bets his entire *Alpha* collection that Dimir Doppelganger can turn into a Shivan Dragon without an activation cost, don't let your faulty memory of errata and card rulings stand in your way. One trip to the online version of *Magic* and you'll never be hoodwinked again.

Magic Online comes equipped with a near-flawless rules engine that only fails a ruling on those extremely rare cases when it hiccups on a programming bug. That's probably happened once or twice in recent memory, so it's like having a Level 5 judge sitting right next to you and advising your every move in between Surplees.

Better yet, the latest release, version 3.0, launches this spring (with beta testing beginning in January) and promises even more polish on an already spiffy game engine. In 3.0, everything has been recoded from the ground up, so we'll see better graphics, greater customizability and more options, such as 3D cards, flexible menus and new multiplayer tournaments.

If you own a computer and patiently await *Magic's* next set release, February's *Guildpact* (the online version launches a few weeks after its physical counterpart), check out these new additions that seriously upgrade *Magic Online* 3.0 from previous versions:



- 1. NEW LIFE COUNTERS** Snazzy spin-down life counters adorn a streamlined player info section with clickable updates on hand size, library and graveyard.
- 2. BIGGER IS BETTER** An optimized play space gives you more real estate; it's 30-40 percent larger than previous versions. Plus, the designers have added a variety of music tracks for your enjoyment.
- 3. CUSTOMIZABLE MENUS** You can minimize and maximize elements to your heart's content. Items like the chat window can become 50-percent transparent so you can see what's going on beneath them.
- 4. SUPER CONVENIENCE** You can navigate anywhere in one or two clicks. Areas like Community, Cards, Game Play, Settings and the Store appear on floating, roll-over menus.
- 5. 3D WORLD** Everything from cards to avatars has been programmed to be an object in the new interface. You can now zoom in on cards to view the artwork and text, and visual features work seamlessly.
- 6. MULTIPLAYER LIVES** Multiplayer formats, such as Two-Headed Giant, will be implemented with the new DCI rules. Under the old engine, this was impossible.
- 7. FASTER TOURNAMENTS** Remember those eight-hour pre-release events? A thing of the past. Under 3.0, tournaments will be wrapped up more quickly, with only Swiss play in most events and no top eight.
- 8. SOUPED-UP COLLECTION** Though the classic mode is still available, an updated card collection will display virtual cards in a 9-pocket binder layout. Much easier on the eyes.
- 9. MENTOR MAGIC** Live "mentors" will assist players in the practice rooms and help them prepare to move into the big, bad tourney rooms and become online champions. **Mike Searle**

6 VS. SYSTEM

Marvel Universe mutates and carries comic TCGs into a Silver Age

"Mutants are really their own storyline," says Mike Hummel, lead designer of the Vs. System TCG. "To be a mutant in the Marvel Universe is very different from being an Avenger or a Fantastic Four member." And X-Men is going to bring mutants and all the baggage that comes with them to the game on February 22.

While this set will revisit the X-Men and Brotherhood teams from *Marvel Origins*, it'll do so without reprinting a single card. And it will break new ground with shadowy *homo superior* characters from the *Mutlocks* and *Hellfire Club*. Also, unlike the *Origins* "mutants" who weren't any different from any other character, every mutant character will actually "be" a mutant in *X-Men*.

No half-mutants/half-cosmic-irradiated-gooners set here. *X-Men* will mutate the game with one giant core mechanic that explores every aspect of Marvel's freak genes while incorporating all the X-Men stories that Hummel has been dying to put in his game. From Claremont's Dark Phoenix Saga and Mutant Massacre to Whedon's recent run on *Astonishing X-Men*, this set is mutie grouple nirvana. And it comes just in time to keep Professor X's little rascals legal in the Silver Age.





THE X-FACTOR UNLEASHED There're no sentinels to protect you from the mutant menace of X-Men.

UPDATED TEAM: X-Men

"Most of the characters that were featured in [*Origins*] will be back" with different versions and costs, says Hummel. We're also going to see "Lockheed and a few others ... that may just recently have been X-Men or that we didn't cover the first time." The set will focus on Chris Claremont's X-Men of the '80s and the Mutant Massacre, but draws from the entire run, including all the characters from Joss Whedon's recent run on *Astonishing X-Men*. Strategically, X-Men decks will focus on the recover strategy we've seen before and an off-curve build similar to what we saw with the Blackbird and Cyclops, Slim, from *Origins*.



THE RIGHT TO BEAR X-MEN

"In Silver Age, we want to have a good sampling of the high-name teams," says Hummel. Debuting later this year, the Silver Age is going to be a middle ground between Golden Age and Modern Age play. The Silver Age will include the eight latest expansions on a rotating basis. The *Origins* sets will be the first to rotate out later this year, and they'll take the lion's share of X-Men, Gotham Knights and other core teams with them. So Hummel and company are "identifying iconic teams that we want to see players pretty much always have access to in a high-level, competitive sense, and we want to rotate them back in." The X-Men and Brotherhood are the first teams to benefit from this design direction, but they won't be the last. Hummel and company plan to keep the Gotham Knights, Avengers, Team Superman and other fan favorites in Silver Age by revisiting them in future expansions.

"We want the teams that we're bringing back to speak mechanically to how they appeared the first time, but we also want to take them into new directions," says Hummel. "With the X-Men, we established some mechanical identities, and we want to repeat them" in the new set. However, "leaders didn't exist when we did the X-Men the first time... We wanted to take those characters who should've gotten those mechanics the first time, and make those."

Don't worry that this return trip to mutant nation is an excuse for the design team to get lazy. There won't be any reprinted cards in *X-Men*, and this set will bring a new mechanic that no X-fan could be without: mutant traits.

MUTANT GENESIS

"This entire set will deal with the different mutation traits," says Hummel. "The traits will be outside the text box," like team affiliations, so characters still have them while stunned.



THREAT ASSESSMENT The Hellfire Club (above) will abuse the concealed area beginning in February, while you'll need to wait till May's *Infinite Crisis* for the Shadowpact (top).



These traits won't be in the version or team lines, but in a new graphic feature of the frames.

"There's going to be a number of mutation categories," says Hummel, reflecting the different flavors of mutant abilities. Upper Deck won't tell us exactly what the traits will be, but Cyclops might have an energy-style trait, while Wolverine might have something along the lines of physical. There won't be rules text associated with the traits. Instead, as with willpower, other cards will key off them, creating effects tied to that trait. "One [mutation] category might be all about KOing effects and board control, another one might be exhausting, another might be card draw." In some ways, the mutant traits will be even more powerful than team affiliation.

UPDATED TEAM: Brotherhood

"You're gonna see more rush strategies, because that's really what they're known for: Rush, burn, location hate, things like that," says Hummel. The designers also wanted one of the teams to build on reservists, and Magneto's Acolytes will make an appearance in that role: "The Brotherhood wants to recycle its reservists a lot faster (than the Avengers did). So instead of trying to maintain this threshold of them, trying to build up, it's all about trying to cycle through your deck as fast as possible." But hey, who's to say it's gonna be the same-old Brotherhood? Check out the Juggernaut here, who's working for the X-Men for a change. Hasn't Magneto been chummy with them in the past too?



NEW TEAM: The Morlocks

"You're gonna see Callisto, you're gonna see her band" from 1986's "Mutant Massacre" storyline, says Hummel. "But we also get into a little bit of the Chicago Morlocks and you're gonna see the Gene Nation." The Morlocks will have an ability Hummel and the design team "jokingly labeled 'it's a trap,' where the Morlock hides in the hidden area and then jumps out to the visible area for an effect." The Morlocks will also bring evasion back into the game, but with stun triggers giving you a reason to evade outside of combat, and they'll have effects that look at how many stunned characters you control.



"Historically most people have chosen one or two team affiliations. In *X-Men*, it's going to be much easier to cross the team affiliation line if you decide to go into a mutation trait line." There will also be ways to give characters mutant traits.

The set will have non-mutant characters—including Lockheed, Juggernaut and a few non-mutant legacy characters—but everyone in this set that is a mutant will have a mutant trait. And with four mutant teams, that's gonna be a lot of mutants.

INFINITE CRISIS

"The *Crisis* plotline for DC is all about change," says Hummel. "It's gonna change the DCU," and May's *Infinite Crisis* set will tie directly into it. "It's the most topical set we've ever done." For example, "we, under contract, know the identities of the new mantle characters, like who the new Blue Beetle is, and we're definitely going to get it in there." Tied to what DC is pegging as its most cataclysmic storyline in 20 years, this set promises to give the *Vs. System*'s trickier side a lot more firepower.

"It's a great place for us to really get wild with some of the directions," says Hummel. "Just how magic works, with Shadowpact, is gonna be huge. It's gonna be a big feature in the set." *Infinite Crisis* will also be the DC answer to *X-Men*, in that Hummel and Co. will use it to ensure Silver Age has all the tools it needs to be an interesting environment once the *Origins* sets rotate out of play. However, don't look for a return of the Gotham Knights just yet; this will be the last foreseeable expansion to feature four new teams, as we'll get Checkmate, Villains United and OMAC teams as well. There's too much going on to fit a *redux* of DC's marquee squads. ■TM

NEW TEAM: The Hellfire Club

"The Hellfire club is going to focus a lot around the 'Dark Phoenix Saga,' because the movie is obviously gonna have a strong tie-in to that plotline," says Hummel. So there will be a Hellfire version of Dark Phoenix. Mechanically, they'll have effects that center on having only one character in the visible area, who effectively functions as the "King," while the rest of the team hides in the shadows. Also, "as a Hellfire Club member makes his exit, he's going to make life difficult for your opponent" through KO-triggered effects that force you to make choices during recovery. You may choose to "not recover your biggest character because getting rid of that bigger character might actually give you more of an effect than if you recover it."



GREAT GALACTUS MYSTERY

Heralds to offer unlimited, eternal power in 2006

The Heralds of Galactus. That's the confirmed title for the *Vs.* set that releases in August. But what does that mean? Oh sure, we can guess that we'll see guys like the Silver Surfer, Nova, Terrax and Firelord that scouted the universe for the Big G—Galactus actually used to have a big "G" on his belt buckle, no joke—searching for digestible planets, and we'll probably also get lesser-known cosmic messengers such as Air-Walker and the Destroyer, but that leaves two big questions unanswered.

One: How do you cram unlimited power into a *Vs.* card? Yeah, yeah... They did Dark Phoenix, but she only destroyed one planet and got herself killed a couple issues later. Galactus eats worlds like M&Ms and has been around for almost 40 years.

Two: What kind of teams do you try and build around a Galactus-themed set? Space-based teams seem likely. The Guardians of the Galaxy. The Shi'ar Imperial Guard. Thanos, Warlock and the other characters who manipulated the gems of the Infinity Gauntlet. Heck, we've already seen the Skrulls; why not the Kree and guys like Captain Marvel and Ronan the Accuser?

There's plenty of room to work with in the Galactus set. But all of our conjecture and guessing made us sure of exactly one thing: We don't know anything for sure. So we went to the source, Lead Designer Mike Hummel, for whatever facts we could dig up at this early stage.

"The big thing to know," according to Hummel, is "Galactus is gonna have more functionality" than some of the big guns you've seen in the past. "We're not gonna just make one Galactus." Like Kang, expect to see a bunch of versions of He Who Hungers at different power levels. We wouldn't be surprised to see the Fantastic Four make their return here either, as the team has put the kibosh on Galactus's buffet plans in the past.

Will this be the most powerful set ever made for the *Vs. System*? It's a safe bet with multiple Galactuses running around. Whether or not it will destroy the planet remains to be seen.

IQ staff



8 COLLATERAL DAMAGE

A complete visual guide to the newest set for 'DC HeroClix'



The wife of a Justice Leaguer aged. A supervillain lobotomized. Batman betrayed by his most trusted ally... If you followed comics at all in the last year, you couldn't miss the upheaval going on in the DC Universe as heroes turned against heroes, the Dark Knight's paranoia was turned into a weapon against humanity and the greatest threats the world has ever known united into a force never before seen by the guardians of law and order. That's what you get in DC HeroClix: Collateral Damage, on sale in February.

While key characters in the Identity Crisis and Infinite Crisis storylines—such as Dr. Light, the Hanged Man, the new Belphegor and the COMACs—make waves through the new set, it's also chock full of something we always want in an expansion: more team players.

We'll now be able to include Green Lantern Kyle Rayner on that team, and the JSA gets long-awaited figs such as Dr. Mid-Nite and the Crimson Avenger. And don't get us started on Flash's Rogues Gallery: we've been waiting for them forever, and WinKids is off to a great start here.

And that's just the beginning. All-new scripts that include pieces of the environment give collectors a fresh reason to search out the figures: They're more like minute pieces of art, more like real little sculptures, than ever before! When you add to that the level of detail WinKids has employed in bringing us just the right Superman—there are three different figures of him in this set—or a particular mad monkey, CD is sure to make any player weep with joy.



ADAM STRANGE

Indiana Jones in Space

10 10 8 8

★★★★★

HIS DEAL While fleeing from South American natives, archeologist Adam Strange was struck by the Zeta Beam and transported to the planet Rann, where he became its greatest adventurer.

POWERS Five slots each of running shot and ranged attack expert; two each of phasing, enhancement, defend and willpower; and one of leadership.

PV=88

UNIQUE



BLUE DEVIL

The Weirdness Magnet

10 10 8 8

★★★

HIS DEAL Dan Cassidy was wearing a hi-tech costume when a demon attacked.

POWERS Five slots of toughness, four each of leap/climb and psychic blast, three of super strength, two each of regeneration and close combat expert and one of invulnerability. Probability control gained in experienced, with four other powers lost in lesser figs.

PV=100



AMBUSH BUG

What? Me Worry?

10 10 10 0 1

★★★★

HIS DEAL Where Irwin Schwab found the costume that allows him to teleport anywhere on the planet is still a mystery. He has long harbored a desire to be Superman's partner, but for the present works with Cheeks the Toy Wonder, a selfless and courageous sidekick.

POWERS Five slots each of phasing and super senses, three of outwit and two of probability control.

PV=50

UNIQUE



CAPTAIN BOOMERANG

Return to Sender

9 9 8 8

★★★

HIS DEAL The son of the original Captain Boomerang and Melowni Thawne, the mother of the current Kid Flash, Owen Mercer inherited his mother's speed and father's skill with thrown weapons.

POWERS Three slots of running shot, three each of explosion and incapacitate, two of willpower and one each of hypersonic speed and super senses.

PV=78

UNIQUE



AZRAEL

Angel of Death

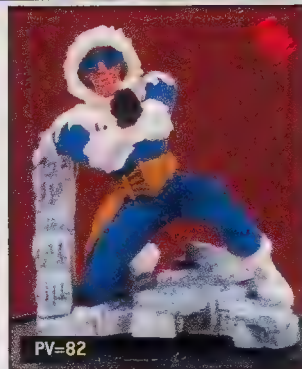
10 10 10 4 4

★★★★

HIS DEAL Jean-Paul Valley was indoctrinated into work for the Order of Dumas.

POWERS Four slots each of charge, leap/climb and combat reflexes, three of toughness and two each of blades, super strength, close combat expert and support. Support lost in lesser versions; some powers replaced with battle fury, super senses and willpower.

PV=65



CAPTAIN COLD

Have an Ice Day

9 9 8 8

★★★

HIS DEAL While plotting how to eliminate the Flash, career criminal Len Snart accidentally irradiated an experimental handgun of his own design, giving it super cold-generation abilities.

POWERS Five slots each of plasticity and incapacitate, four of barrier and two of running shot. Expected power losses in cheaper figures, with no running shot in rookie.

PV=82



BLACK LIGHTNING

Impervious to Static Cling

10 10 10 10 3

★★★★

HIS DEAL An athlete who returned home to become a teacher, Jefferson Pierce would don a belt that gave him the ability to generate electricity and fight crime.

POWERS Four slots of incapacitate, three each of willpower and exploit weakness, and two each of running shot and charge. Normal power losses in cheaper versions; no willpower in rookie.

PV=88



CLAYFACE

His Name Is Mud

10 10 10 2 4

★★★★

HIS DEAL Basil Karlo injected himself with the essence of several Clayfaces, gaining their shapechanging abilities.

POWERS Seven slots each of plasticity, super strength and shapechange; three of toughness; two of exploit weakness; and one each of charge and claws. No charge in lesser figs; experienced gains battle fury.

PV=89



BLACK MASK

Black is Beautiful

8 8 9 16 6 8

★★★★

HIS DEAL After he killed his parents and inherited their fortune, Roman Sionis ran their business into the ground and turned to crime.

POWERS Three slots each of mastermind and willpower, two each of stealth and outwit, and one each of leadership and perplex. Leadership lost in both cheaper versions; perplex and willpower gone in rookie.

PV=65



CRIMSON AVENGER

Guns of a Ghost

7 7 9 16 8 8

★★★★★

HIS DEAL Cursed to wield the guns of the original Crimson Avenger after she used them in an act of violence, this new and mysterious Avenger is the pawn of a mysterious supernatural force that uses her to execute the guilty.

POWERS Four slots of psychic blast, two of ranged attack expert, and one each of phasing and regeneration.

PV=53

UNIQUE



DR. LIGHT

Heart of Darkness

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★

HIS DEAL Through studies of science and Thanagarian technology, Dr. Arthur Light learned to create a number of devices built around light manipulation.

POWERS Five slots each of enhancement and ranged attack expert, four of pulse wave and three of incapacitate. Expected power loss in lesser versions; experienced gains two slots of mastermind.



ELONGATED MAN

Wiry Widower

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★

HIS DEAL The sexual assault of Ralph's wife by Dr. Light was the impetus for the mind-wiping of villains by the JLA, leading to the events of *Identity Crisis* and *Infinite Crisis*.

POWERS Three slots each of leap/climb, plasticity and incapacitate; and two each of super senses, probability control and outwit.



DR. MID-NITE

Blind Man's Bluff

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★

HIS DEAL Injected with an experimental steroid, Dr. Pieter Cross developed the ability to see in the dark.

POWERS Six slots each of stealth and smoke cloud, four of support, three each of defend and willpower and two of perplex. Significant power drops in cheaper versions; defend lost in both and willpower and perplex in rookie.



EMERALD EMPRESS

Do They Make Contacts That Big?

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★

HER DEAL In the 30th century, Saryva conquered her homeworld after discovering the long-lost Emerald Eye. She helped found the Fatal Five.

POWERS Four slots each of explosion and toughness, three each of force blast and pulse wave, two each of running shot and enhancement, and one of invulnerability. Minor power losses in cheaper versions.



DR. PSYCHO

Midget with Mind Muscle

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★★

HIS DEAL Obsessed with destroying Wonder Woman's sanity, the mysterious Dr. Psycho ravaged the psyche of Vanessa Kapatelis, Wonder Woman's teenage friend, in an effort to mentally manipulate the amazon.

POWERS Six slots of incapacitate, four each of mind control and mastermind, and three of battle fury.



FELIX FAUST

Magical Mystery Tour

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★★

HIS DEAL Inspired by the literary Faust who sold his soul for supernatural abilities, Felix devoted himself to the dark arts in pursuit of omnipotent magical powers.

POWERS Four slots of perplex; three each of force blast, psychic blast, barrier and probability control, two of quake and one each of explosion and pulse wave.



ECLIPSO

A Woman Scorned

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★★★

HER DEAL After the Atom's wife, Jean Loring, was incarcerated in Arkham Asylum for killing the wife of the Elongated Man, she was seduced by the power of Eclipso.

POWERS Five slots of toughness, four of psychic blast, three each of stealth and mind control and two each of pulse wave, invulnerability and regeneration.



FIRE

Flame On, Baby!

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★

HER DEAL After working as a spy for the Brazilian Secret Service, Beatriz Da Costa joined the multinational superteam The Global Guardians.

POWERS Four slots of enhancement, three of explosion and two each of running shot, pulse wave and ranged combat expert. Running shot traded for poison in experienced; no powers at all in rookie.



ELONGATED MAN

Mr. Silly Putty

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★

HIS DEAL Ralph Dibney isolated the key ingredient in a soda pop called "Gingold" and gained stretching powers.

POWERS Four slots of incapacitate; three of probability control; two each of leap/climb, super senses, toughness and outwit; and one of charge. No charge in cheaper figs; no outwit in rookie.



GEO-FORCE

Brother from Another Mother

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

★★★

HIS DEAL Prince Brion Markov was given powers by scientist Helga Jace in order to help repel the invasion of his country, Markovia, by Baron Bedlam. He is the half-brother of Teen Titan Terra and a former member of Batman's Outsiders.

POWERS Five slots of super strength, three of toughness and two each of charge and ranged attack expert.



GEO-FORCE

King for a Day

 8 3
★★★★★

HIS DEAL After his brother died, Brion assumed the throne, then abdicated.

POWERS Five slots of toughness; four each of super strength and quake; three of charge; two each of running shot, ranged combat expert and close combat expert; and one of invulnerability. Leadership in experienced; running shot and close combat expert lost in rookie.

PV=136 EXPERIENCED/VETERAN



GREEN LANTERN

Artsy-Fartsy

 10 10 10 10 10
★★★★★

HIS DEAL When Hal Jordan destroyed the Green Lantern Corps, only one ring was left. The Guardian Ganthet bestowed this ring on unsuspecting artist Kyle Rayner.

POWERS Four slots of barrier; three of running shot and enhancement; and two each of phasing, explosion, telekinesis, incapacitate, perplex and ranged attack expert.

PV=121 ROOKIE/EXPERIENCED



GREEN LANTERN

Knows Fear...Personally

 10 10 10 10 10
★★★★★

HIS DEAL Kyle was instrumental in reassembling the Corps destroyed by Hal Jordan.

POWERS Four slots of enhancement; three each of running shot, phasing, telekinesis, incapacitate and ranged attack expert; and two each of explosion, barrier, willpower and perplex. No willpower in lesser versions, nor phasing or incapacitate in rookie.

PV=167 VETERAN



GUARDIAN

Clone Ranger

 9 10 10 10 10
★★★★★

HIS DEAL When the government sold its trademark Guardian name to a tabloid newspaper, it hired disgraced ex-cop Jake Jordan to personify its motto: "We don't just report crime. We fight it."

POWERS Four slots of charge, three of toughness, two each of flurry and willpower, and one of combat reflexes.

PV=47 UNIQUE



HIVE TROOPER

Float Like a Butterfly

 8 9 10 10 10
★★★★★

THEIR DEAL The Hierarchy of International Vengeance and Extermination was formed by a number of criminal scientists and became a force in scientific terrorism.

POWERS Three slots of stealth and two each of earthbound, explosion and willpower in the vet; flurry, explosion and enhancement in the experienced; stealth and smoke cloud in the rookie.

PV=25

HEROCLIX COLLECTOR'S SET

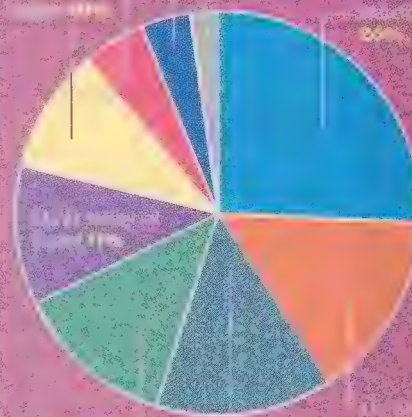
Fan-voted, full team packs figure into 2006 mix

Dreams do come true, boys and girls. After years of us yakkin' till we were hoarse, we're finally gonna get our heart's desire. In February, WizKids will introduce the *HeroClix* Collector's Club, which'll give fans access to prepackaged sets of figures available nowhere else.

Made up of five to seven figures per pack, the new sets will all be packaged around a specific theme or team, and the only way to get 'em is to buy boosters at your local store. If you buy a "brick" of 12 boosters at your favorite hobby shop—this deal isn't good when you buy them online—and send in for your free Krypto figure, you're automatically enrolled in the club. You'll then have the option—and who wouldn't take it?—of buying one of the limited collector's sets at a special club price. Leftover sets may be available down the road at conventions—maybe—but you'll be extremely lucky to pick one up this way.

As for what you're getting in the first set, *DC HeroClix Giants* will feature seven giant-sized figs from a variety of teams—including one for Kingdom Come! The Justice Society lands Atom Smasher, the Legion Of Superheroes gets Colossal Boy, and Doom Patrol's Rita Farr joins the Outsiders. Meanwhile on the villain front, Chemo and Giganta throw in with the Injustice League; Alloy goes to Kingdom Come and Validus takes up with the Calculator squad.

Future sets will be voted on by fans, leaving the door wide open to what's in store. Just to get the fire started, we ran our own poll and this is what you want to see. **BF**



RORSCHACH FROM WATCHMEN



ICE

Frozen Stiff

 8 8 8 8 8
★★★★★

HER DEAL Tora Olafsdotter was a princess of magical ice-people in Norway. She would later join the Global Guardians, then the Justice League with her friend Fire and date Green Lantern Guy Gardner.

POWERS Five slots of incapacitate, four of barrier, and two of defend. Normal power drops in cheaper figs; no defend in rookie.

PV=60



JONAH HEX

Worst Blind Date Ever

♣ 9 ♠ 8 ☆ 1 ★★★★★

HIS DEAL Sold to the Apache when he was 13, Hex eventually earned their friendship. After killing one of the Apache in self-defense over a past grievance, the chief burned Hex's face, scarring him horribly.

POWERS Five slots of willpower, three of ranged attack expert, and one of running shot.



MARY MARVEL

Squeaky Clean and Twice as Cute

♣ 11 ♠ 0 ☆ 2 ★★★★★

HER DEAL The long-lost sister of Billy Batson was switched for the deceased child of another family.

POWERS Nine slots of super strength; four each of charge, invulnerability and exploit weakness; three each of hypersonic speed and toughness; one each of quake, impervious and outwit. Impervious lost in experienced; no quake and outwit in rookie.



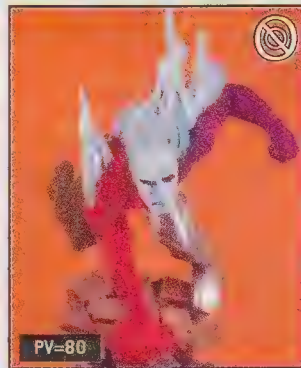
KALIBAK

Don't Call me "Junior"!

♣ 9 ♠ 4 ☆ 4 ★★★★★

HIS DEAL The firstborn son of Darkseid, Kalibak the Cruel is constantly at war trying to prove himself against his half-brother Orion, who was raised on New Genesis.

POWERS Seven slots of battle fury, six slots of super strength, five of quake, four of toughness, three each of flurry and invulnerability, two of charge and one of phasing.



METAMORPHO

Has a Heart of Gold...Literally

♣ 9 ♠ 17 ☆ 10 ☆ 2 ★★★★★

HIS DEAL Rex Mason gained the ability to transform his body into any element.

POWERS Four slots each of phasing and shapechange; three slots each of plasticity and incapacitate; two each of poison, toughness, super senses and regeneration; one each of smoke cloud and exploit weakness. Senses and exploit weakness lost by rookie level.



KATANA

Babe with a Blade

♣ 10 ♠ 17 ☆ 4 ☆ 2 ★★★★★

HER DEAL When her family was killed by a Yakuza member, Tatsu Yamashiro used the legendary Soul taker sword against him.

POWERS Three slots each of charge, blades and exploit weakness; two each of combat reflexes and willpower; One of steal energy. Charge, steal energy and willpower exchanged for stealth and close combat expert in cheaper versions.



MONSIEUR MALLAH

The Monkey's Super-Intelligent Uncle

♣ 9 ♠ 6 ☆ 3 ★★★★★

HIS DEAL Given genius-level intelligence by the scientist and surgeon who later became the Brain, Mallah returned the favor by attaching the scientist's brain to life support after his body died.

POWERS Rookie level. Five slots of toughness, four of battle fury, three of leap/climb, two of flurry and one of charge.



KRYPTO

Bite Me, Bob Barker!

♣ 10 ♠ 6 ☆ 3 ★★★★★

HIS DEAL When Superman and Lois Lane once traveled through the Phantom Zone to a false version of Krypton, they were followed back to Earth by Superman's pet.

POWERS Six slots of super strength; three each of charge and toughness; two each of flurry, invulnerability and battle fury; and a single slot of psychic blast.



THE BRAIN

Where's Pinky?

♣ 4 ♠ 9 ☆ 15 ☆ 8 ☆ 2 ★★★★★

HIS DEAL A French criminal genius, the Brain has been constantly at odds with the Doom Patrol, even replacing Robotman's brain with his own at one point.

POWERS Four slots of mastermind; three each of psychic blast, outwit and perplex; and two each of willpower.



MANHUNTER

Shoot First and Let God Sort 'Em Out

♣ 10 ♠ 7 ☆ 6 ☆ 2 ★★★★★

HER DEAL When Copperhead escaped justice, prosecutor Kate Spenser killed him.

POWERS Six slots of leap/climb; three each of toughness and exploit weakness; two each of incapacitate, psychic blast and willpower; and one each of super strength and combat reflexes. Battle fury and close combat expert gained in experienced; strength and toughness lost in rookie.



MONSIEUR MALLAH & THE BRAIN

Ewww....Gross!

♣ 11 ♠ 10 ☆ 8 ☆ 3 ★★★★★

THEIR DEAL When the Brain had a body, the pair were finally able to express their love. Ewww...

POWERS Six slots of toughness, five of psychic blast, four of perplex, three of outwit, and two each of running shot, flurry and exploit weakness.



OMAC

Observational Meta-Human Activity Construct

10 17 6 3
★★★★

HIS DEAL The Brother I satellite created an army of nano-tech-enhanced soldiers.

POWERS Four slots of outwit; three of plasticity; two each of stealth, psychic blast, super strength, toughness, regeneration, exploit weakness and shapechange; one of charge. Various powers traded out in lesser figs to gain leap/climb, stealth, pulse wave, combat reflexes and perplex.



RED TORNADO

When He Breaks Wind...

10 17 6 3
★★★★★

HIS DEAL Red Tornado married and adopted a daughter. He would sacrifice his android body and emerge as Earth's air elemental.

POWERS Five slots of force blast; three each of telekinesis, willpower and enhancement; two each of quake, smoke cloud and close combat expert. No close combat expert in cheaper versions, nor willpower in rookie.



ORION

What if Mr. T was Darkseid's Son?

10 17 8 4
★★★★

HIS DEAL Darkseid's son Orion was exchanged at birth for the son of New Genesis' Highfather as part of a peace accord.

POWERS Five slots of toughness; four each of super strength, invulnerability and battle fury; three each of charge and flurry; two each of earthbound and close combat expert; and one each of running shot, enhancement and exploit weakness.



SHADOW LASS

Tasmia-n Devil

10 17 6 3
★★★

HER DEAL Tasmia Mallor was one of the Shadow Champions of Talok III. When rejected by her people, she joined the Legion of Super-Heroes, fighting Mordru, Blight and Singularity, among other threats.

POWERS Six slots of smoke cloud and five each of stealth and defend. Slightly less than expected power loss between figures.



OWLMAN

Give a Hoot, Don't Kill Your Father

10 17 6 3
★★★★

HIS DEAL On Earth 2, Thomas Wayne Jr. took to crime when his mother and brother Bruce were killed by a policeman.

POWERS Four slots each of leap/climb and willpower; three each of stealth and smoke cloud; two each of outwit, close combat expert and exploit weakness; one each of flurry, incapacitate and toughness.



RAGMAN

Clothes Make the Man

10 17 0 2
★★★★★

HIS DEAL Created to defend the Jews during WWII, the costume of Rory Regan gathers the souls of the wicked into it.

POWERS Five slots of steal energy, four of leap/climb, three of stealth, two each of willpower and exploit weakness, and one of super strength. No willpower, exploit weakness or strength in experienced; rookie gains back most but loses stealth.



RED TORNADO

From Rann with Love

9 17 4 2
★★★

HIS DEAL Created to destroy the JLA by T.O. Morrow, the android assassin was possessed by the creature known as "the Tornado Champion," which had split apart from the Tornado Tyrant on the planet Rann.

POWERS Three slots of force blast; two each of smoke cloud, quake and enhancement; and one of telekinesis.

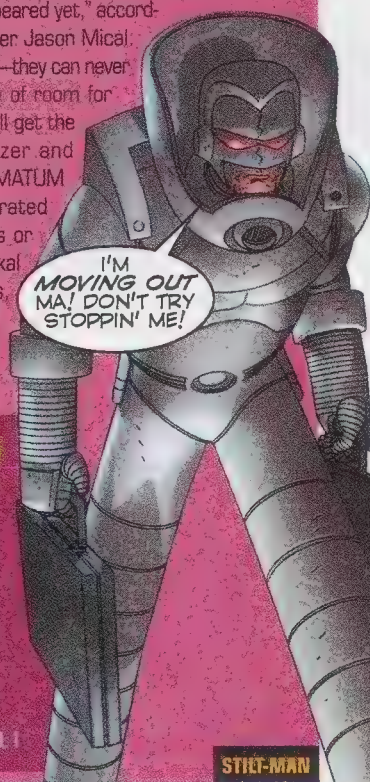
10 FUTURE 'HEROCLIX' SETS

What are the odds these bad guys will show up in the next two Marvel-based sets later this year?

Game companies love their secrets, and the makers of HeroClix are no different. Though WizKids is being very hush-hush about the rest of the year when it comes to the best superhero miniatures game on the planet, we did manage to find out that there are two Marvel releases in the pipe: one due in the summer, and one in the fall.

We even managed to squeeze one more hint out of their clandestine plans. The next set will be "supervillain-centric" and "mainly new characters, or versions of characters that haven't appeared yet," according to WizKids Communications Manager Jason Mical. That might not tell us all we want to know—they can never tell us that much—but it leaves plenty of room for our imaginations to run wild. Maybe we'll get the rest of the Wrecking Crew, Bulldozer and Piledriver. Maybe we'll get a load of ULTIMATUM (Underground Liberated Totally Integrated Mobile Army To Unite Mankind) grunts or '70s classics such as Batroc, the Jackal and Gladiator. After talking to WizKids, we've come up with some odds on a mess of villains that might have a shot at the big time. ■ BF

NAME	ODDS
Mastermind	12:1
Classic Rhino	3:1
Classic Electro	4:1
Cassandra Nova	5:1
Proteus	8:1
The Void	10:1
Gauntlet	50:1
Winter Soldier	100:1
Purple Man	500:1
Slit-Man	1,000,000:1





SPEEDY

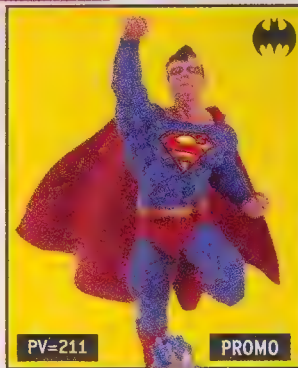
Teen Hooker Sidekick

16 8 16 8 16 8

★★★

HIS DEAL After running away from home and an abusive father, Mia Dearden was rescued from a life of child prostitution by the newly resurrected Green Arrow.

POWERS Three slots each of stealth, incapacitate and ranged combat expert; two of leap/climb. Expected power losses in lesser figures; no incapacitate in rookie.



SUPERMAN

Buns of Steel Reborn

10 10 10 10 10 10

★★★★★

HIS DEAL While combating the menace of the Millennium Giants, Superman helped them purge harmful energies from Earth and was returned to his usual form.

POWERS Eight slots of super strength; four of RA expert; three each of force blast, invulnerability and toughness; two each of running shot, psychic blast, impervious and super senses; one of hypersonic speed.



SUPERMAN BLUE

Dude, Where's My Cape?

10 10 10 10 10 10

★★★★★

HIS DEAL Hal Jordan was able to save Earth from the menace of the Sun-Eater, but Superman was left with strange electrical abilities.

POWERS Rookie/veteran level. Five slots each of phasing and pulse wave; three of toughness; two each of running shot, psychic blast and super senses; and one each of enhancement and regeneration.



TRICKSTER

The Deadliest Class Clown Ever

16 6 16 6 16 6

★★★

HIS DEAL Axel Walker was recruited by the Blacksmith to replace the original Trickster in the Flash's Rogue's Gallery.

POWERS Three slots of shapechange; two each of plasticity, explosion, poison, incapacitate and enhancement; and one of running shot. Some powers replaced in lesser versions with leap/climb, force blast, smoke cloud and perplex.



SUPERMAN RED

Who's Got Some Visine?

10 9 10 9 10 9

★★★

HIS DEAL With the assistance of Toyman, the Cyborg split Superman into two distinct individuals, the impulsive red and the overly competitive blue.

POWERS Experienced level. Five slots of phasing, four of psychic blast, three each of explosion and toughness, two each of running shot and shapechange and one each of invulnerability and regeneration.



VIXEN

One Foxy Lady

9 9 9 9 9 9

★★★★★

HER DEAL Model Mari Jiwe Macabe recovered the mystic Tantu Totem after her father was killed for it while fighting poachers.

POWERS Four slots of stealth; two each of poison, claws, super senses and exploit weakness; and one each of flurry and battle fury. Rookie and experienced replace some powers with those like shapechange, plasticity and close combat expert.

SPECTRE OVERSIZE FIGURE

First there was Galactus, then last year, Dark Phoenix invaded the game. In 2006, DC makes its play for the title of "the most powerful figure in HeroClix" when Spectre becomes the newest oversize promo with bigger dials than the face of Big Ben.

"But who's Spectre?" you might ask. Only the spirit of vengeance in the DC Universe. Back in the '40s, that force bonded itself to the soul of Jim Corrigan, a cop murdered by the mob, and wreaked havoc for more than half a century on criminals and sinners of every size and flavor. After a bout with temporary insanity where Hal Jordan slaughtered most of the Green Lantern Corps and took on the villainous identity of Parallax, Jordan sacrificed himself to save the Earth and his soul replaced that of Corrigan in the personification of the Wrath of God. When Jordan was resurrected in 2005, Spectre was once again left without a human soul to guide it and, beguiled by the newest incarnation of Eclipso, tore through the DC Universe on a mission to eradicate all magic. He was stopped by only the barest of margins. What will become of him without a spark of humanity to keep him in check has yet to be seen.

Rumored by WizKids to be the largest and most powerful figure yet seen in HeroClix, Spectre will first go on sale at Wizard World LA, March 17-19, and then only be sold at Wizard World conventions and Comic-Con International throughout 2006. **BF**



BOO! Forget about picking one up at Gen Con or Origins if you're looking for the most powerful figure ever for HeroClix.

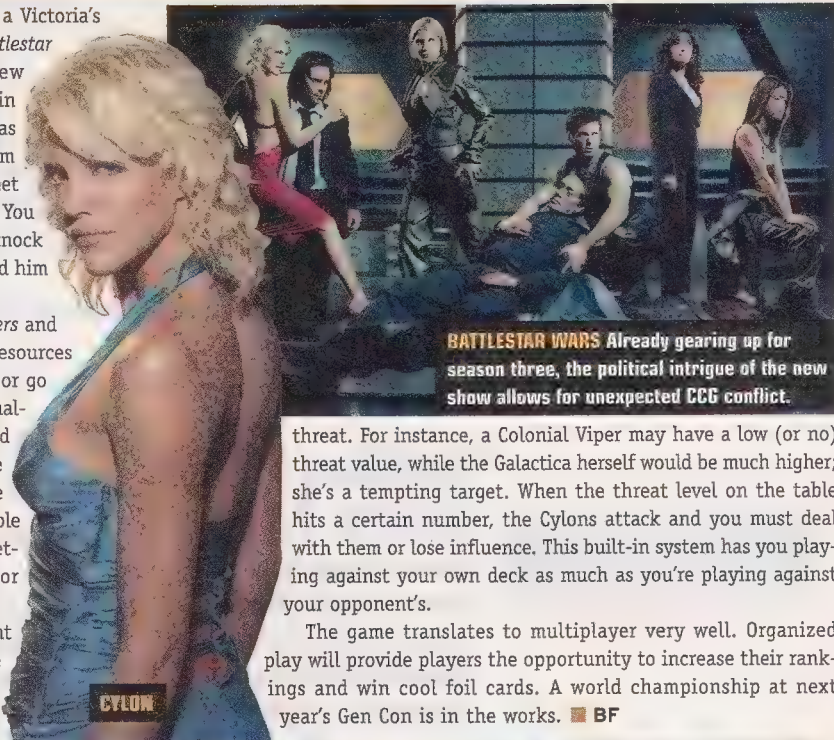
12 BATTLESTAR GALACTICA CCG

Evil gets an upgrade in WizKids' new sci-fi card game

If it has always been your dream to die in the arms of a Victoria's Secret model somewhere in the deep reaches of space, *Battlestar Galactica* is the game for you. Wiping out the new babealicious Cylons is only one part of achieving victory in WizKids' second foray into CCGs, where survival isn't nearly as important as wresting control of your own fleet away from power-hungry rivals. Much like the TV show, control of the fleet is at the heart of the game, scheduled to hit shelves in May. You want to gain influence in order to hit a target number or knock down the influence totals of your foes down to zero and send him packing. That's the goal; the road to it is a bit trickier.

BSG uses a mechanic similar to that found in *Duel Masters* and *Vs.* that allows players to use any card as a resource. These resources are then used to play assets that can challenge opponents or go on missions. Challenges occur between similar assets; ships challenge ships, people challenge people. If a defender can't defend against the challenge, he'll lose influence equal to the attacker's power, otherwise the loser of the challenge loses the asset challenged. Missions are played on your side of the table and are completed by having specific assets in play. Completing a mission provides rewards such as influence gain or additional resources.

But while it's been fairly straightforward up to this point as you and your opponent take turns playing cards, these cards have a price. Each has a "Cylon threat value" attached to it; the more powerful the card, the bigger the potential



BATTLESTAR WARS Already gearing up for season three, the political intrigue of the new show allows for unexpected CCG conflict.

threat. For instance, a Colonial Viper may have a low (or no) threat value, while the *Galactica* herself would be much higher; she's a tempting target. When the threat level on the table hits a certain number, the Cylons attack and you must deal with them or lose influence. This built-in system has you playing against your own deck as much as you're playing against your opponent's.

The game translates to multiplayer very well. Organized play will provide players the opportunity to increase their rankings and win cool foil cards. A world championship at next year's Gen Con is in the works. **BF**

OLD CLASSIC OR NEW SCHOOL?

Which show kicks the most interstellar butt?

Sure, the new millennium version of "BSG" is incredibly cool, but is it really better than the '70s show? Are the cylons deadlier, the ships faster and the commanders more commanding? There are plenty of arguments to be made, but we cherry-picked some of the key elements for comparison. Which show comes out on top? Here are our picks. **NOTE:** Despite what any reader may believe, we do not favor the new show due to its gaggle of robotic babes, as we already own several.

COMMANDER ADAMA



VS.



☐ THEN

Was the dad on "Bonanza"

☒ NOW

Was a cop on "Miami Vice"

We'd rather not have our grandpa lead the fight when we go to war.

STARBUCK



VS.



☒ THEN

Lt. Templeton "Faceman" Peck

☐ NOW

A hot chick

"If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find them, maybe you can hire the A-Team."

RICHARD HATCH



VS.



☒ THEN

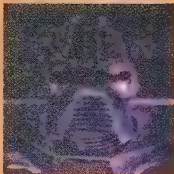
He played Lt. Apollo

☐ NOW

Tom Zarek, political prisoner

Hatch was, is and always will be Apollo. That's why they call it "typecasting."

CYLONS



VS.



☐ THEN

Classic chrome with an electronic eye

☒ NOW

Multiple hot chicks

The old cylons still rock, but the sheer variety of new threats—Lt. Boomer's a cylon?!—make the new AI so much deadlier.

MUFFET



VS.



☐ THEN

Robot dog with a monkey inside

☒ NOW

No dogs or whiny super-genius kids for that matter

Go new "BSG"! Finally, a show without "Wesley Crusher Syndrome!"

13 CONAN CCG

8 reasons why the ultimate barbarian will hack apart the competition

Our favorite Cimmerian's back after 20 years out of the spotlight, and he's about to kick some major butt in the CCG world. After five-plus years of success with its *WWE Raw Deal* wrestling CCG, Comic Images

is adding Conan to its stable of CCG properties later this year. We've got the top reasons why you should be excited enough to crush your enemies, see them driven before you and hear the lamentations of their women. ■ JS

HOT CHICKS WITH SWORDS

Comic Images' Conan CCG won't have any lusty love triangles. But some of its characters won't you with the allure of a girl who can sword-fight like a pro.

UPRIGHT CITIZEN'S ENIGMA

Conan has a lot of enemies, a lot of them. A homicidal priest, a mad scientist, a vampire, a wizard, a mad scientist, a mad scientist. Why? Well, you'll see a lot of them in the game.

COLLECTOR-MANIA

The Conan CCG will be a lot like the old *Raw Deal* game. The game will have about 200 cards, with numerous characters, items, and abilities. So far, we've got both a fast action and a random card game.

TALKS FROM THE DARK SIDE

Conan is a character of great power and great evil. And he's got a lot of dark secrets. And he's got a lot of dark secrets. And he's got a lot of dark secrets.

HE'LL BE BACK

Conan is a character of great power and great evil. And he's got a lot of dark secrets. And he's got a lot of dark secrets. And he's got a lot of dark secrets.

FINE ART

The Conan CCG will be a lot like the old *Raw Deal* game. The game will have about 200 cards, with numerous characters, items, and abilities. So far, we've got both a fast action and a random card game.

THE PLAY'S THE THING

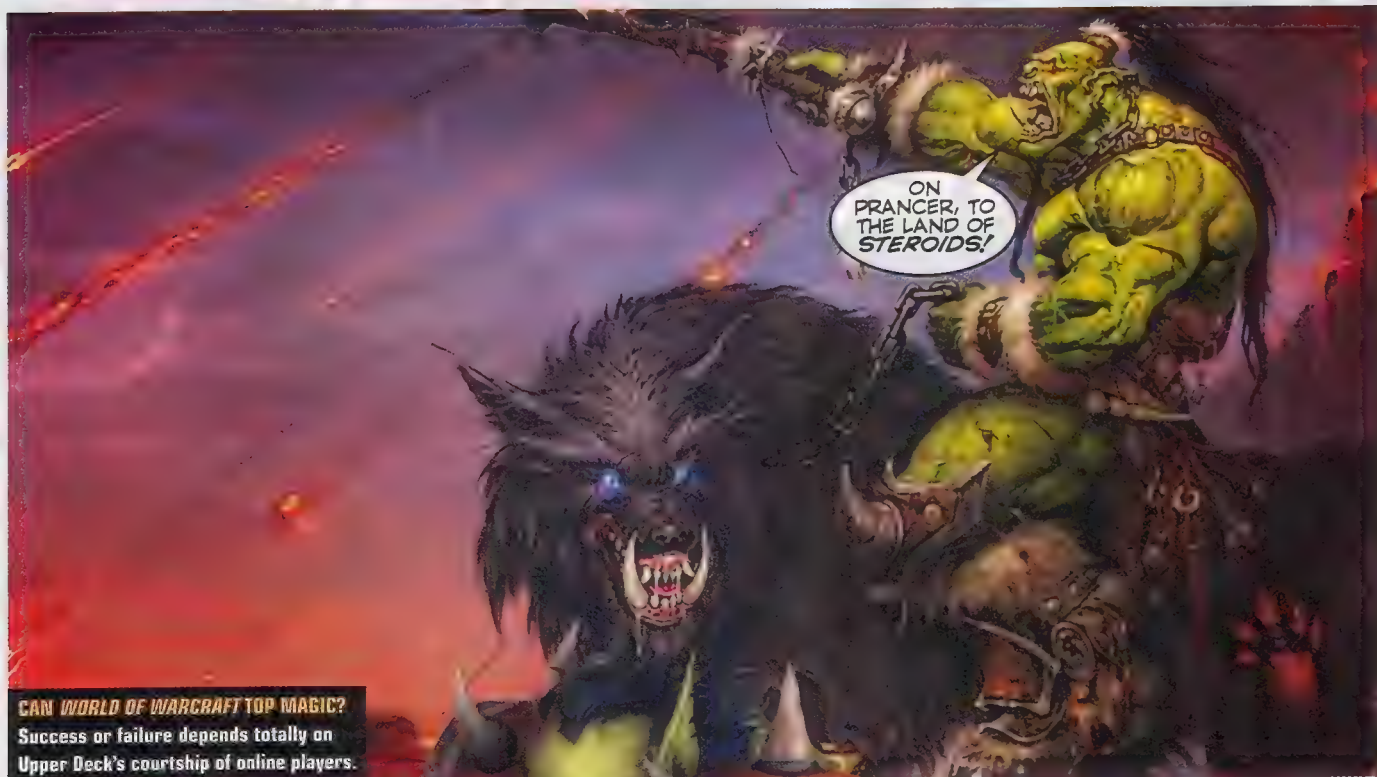
The Conan CCG will be a lot like the old *Raw Deal* game. The game will have about 200 cards, with numerous characters, items, and abilities. So far, we've got both a fast action and a random card game.

NOVEL IDEAS

The Conan CCG will be a lot like the old *Raw Deal* game. The game will have about 200 cards, with numerous characters, items, and abilities. So far, we've got both a fast action and a random card game.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT TCG

Four million players want their card game—and it's almost here!



CAN WORLD OF WARCRAFT TOP MAGIC?
Success or failure depends totally on Upper Deck's courtship of online players.

Think about it. Four million people. That's more than the populations of Philadelphia, Dallas and San Diego combined. And that's how many people are registered to play *World of Warcraft*. Think about it some more, if Upper Deck can get just five percent of that group to pick up a copy of the *WoW TCG* when it releases this summer, they will have sold 200,000 starter decks. That, friends, makes the jungle trolls very happy.

And there is sure to be at least some crossover. Rare loot cards packed with the game will allow for cosmetic upgrades to characters in the online game. If just a handful of the hardest-core online players want to pick up the CCG, the game will sell out before anyone flops the first fel-sworn.

Beyond that, the play mechanics are shrouded in secrecy, though we did find one more hint in a tidbit dropped by UDE Director of Game Development Jeff Donais: "Among the activities, players will be able to build their decks and attend events that let them challenge Onyxia, or raid Molten Core in an attempt to defeat Ragnaros with the hopes of getting powerful Epic cards."

What does this mean? It certainly looks like players will be standing in lines at cons to confront designers or the best players around for the chance

at extremely limited prizes, similar to what Alderac has done with its Medusan Lord promotions. Beyond that though, we're left to speculate.

Ideally, the game would be playable in both player-vs.-player (PvP) and player-vs.-environment (PvE) variations. In online PvP play, gamers could gear their characters up with a specific amount of equipment and special abilities and then fight opponents directly, and in PvE, they could build up characters, earning equipment and special abilities through the course of the game, with the ultimate goal of being the first to earn the most XP or defeat a particular enemy. Two different objectives or play variations would not only make it more appealing to those who love the online game, but also give it a leg up innovation-wise on most other CCGs.

Our ideal game setup would probably allow players to control a party of five characters at once, as opposed to building up a single character, with the ability for characters to not only contribute to defeating enemy monsters, but also to be able to assist and improve each other through healing spells and buffs, just like online. Certain abilities wouldn't be available unless you chose to include a member of that class in your party. For example, only priests have the "Prayer of

Fortitude" spell that increases the hit points of all your party members.

Party balance as part of deck construction would add an interesting and *WoW*-accurate element to the game. Do I bring a priest or a druid as my healer? Do I need to use a warrior as my big gun or can I pull it off with a paladin instead?

But what must Upper Deck do to seduce those millions of online players into backing away from their well-worn keyboards and diving into card sleeves for a while? Two things.

One: The TCG must replicate the online experience. And that means offering a ton of options for races, classes, weapons, etc.—everything that allows the computer game to become a personal experience for each player. It will be difficult enough for the TCG to duplicate the online game's ease of play; computer gamers can log in and play 24-7, while cardflopers must find physical opponents in the real world. However, by offering gamers the ability to highly personalize decks—and no faction or type can suck right out of the gate—Upper Deck can tap into the love the players have already invested in their characters. Players will want to recreate their avatars in the cardboard world—as long as they're just as deadly as in cyberspace.

Two: The randomly packed loot cards are a good start, but offering tournament prizes that can only be redeemed in the virtual world of Azeroth could account for thousands of new players. How many online addicts would dive into the CCG if they could be the only one on Earth to earn a legendary sword or staff at the world championships that could be used in the computer game? There could even be smaller rewards for smaller competitions such as at regional tournaments. These special items would not only play to players' needs to customize their characters while appealing to the "whoever dies with the most toys wins" spirit that lies in the heart of every gamer.

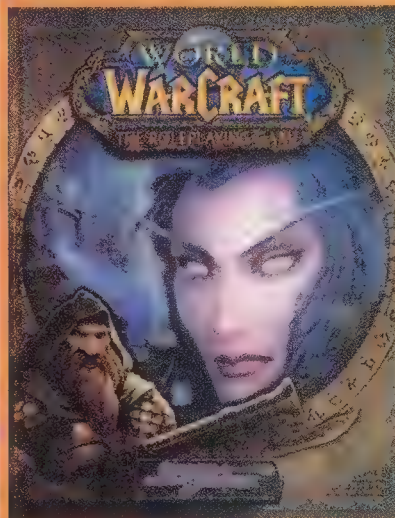
As it is, we'll just have to wait till school's out and the summer cons begin to run fast and deadly to see what Upper Deck has in store for players. Till then though, we've got our dreams. ■ **BF & Jeff Hannes**



BOOTY TIME Fighting dragons, elementals and perhaps even the gods themselves could nab players ultra-rare "Epic" cards.

13 WORLD OF WARCRAFT RPG

THE ONLY WAY TO SEE THE WORLD OF WARCRAFT RPG IN ACTION IS TO PLAY IT.



So you're up to your neck in digital tauren and pixilated paladins. Is that all there is to the life of a sword-slinger in *World of Warcraft*? If you really want to call yourself a fan of the game and if you really want to know all the secrets of both the Alliance and the Horde, you'll need to delve deeper than your keyboard. White Wolf's *World of Warcraft RPG* is an ideal find whether you're looking for a new way to play with your online character—it uses

the Open Gaming License so you're using familiar *D&D* rules—or find out more about the land of Azeroth.

We've already seen sourcebooks on such *WoW* subjects as magic, the gods and other planes and the geography and personalities of Lordaeron and Khaz Modan. And heck, the core RPG book offers huge insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the various races and the way character classes are balanced.

One of the biggest additions to the game in 2006 will be the addition of the *Monster Guide* in May. I can see that you're sighing resignedly at the thought of yet another monster manual. Think again. Not only is this an all-but-mandatory tool for any gamemaster even thinking about running a *WoW* pencil-and-paper campaign, it has the potential to be one of the most vital weapons ever used in the online game. How much would you give for a reference book that spells out the strengths and weaknesses of every monster in the realms? With full-color art and stats out the wazoo, this looks to be the one cross-over gaming product online players cannot afford to miss this year. You can't tell your crocolisks from your scorpids without it! **BF**



HIGH ELF

SONY'S PS3

Power gamer's dream system crashes the polygon party

Since last May's Electronic Entertainment Expo kicked off the latest video game war among Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo, these next-gen giants have battled it out with a war of words that rarely rises above technobabble. Navigating the sea of "cell processors-this" and "teraflops-that" is like talking to a drunken MIT student. But as far as we can tell, all these new polygon powerhouses are going to be über-powerful, making current-gen consoles, and even most gaming PCs, seem like glorified toaster ovens.

We know these game boxes will have tech muscle to spare. We get it. But what about the games? All the cell processors in Silicon Valley won't save a system if it doesn't have the software support.

Microsoft was the first out of the next-gen gate with the Xbox 360, supported by an impressive launch lineup. From the FPS perfection of *Call of Duty 2* to the grisly brain-bashing of *Condemned: Criminal Origins*, 360 owners have already dove into the next-gen pool. Sony will soon jump in the deep end as well, making a splash with the PS3 and its own solid slate of exclusive games.



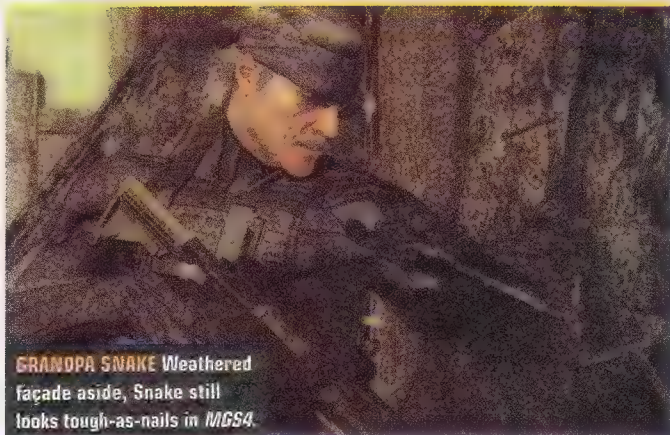
LOCKED & LOADED *Killzone's* killer visuals take aim at Master Chief's digital domain.



THRILL KILLZONE

While *Killzone* for the PS2 couldn't knock Master Chief off his FPS throne, it did prove that Sony could pull off a decent shooter. With *Killzone PS3*, Sony has *Halo's* Spartan hero squarely in its sights. It's too early to call this one a true *Halo*-killer, but it can't be denied that this baby looks like a contender. The futuristic military shooter will continue the saga between the ISA and Helghast, rounding out the intense action with kickass weapons, high-tech vehicles and interactive environments. Battle-fueled chaos and carnage will be the order of the day as *Killzone PS3* thrusts gamers into an ultra-realistic setting that'll have them dodging rat-a-tat rounds and diving for cover... in their living rooms. Few story or play details have emerged, but *Killzone's* E3 trailer had fraggers and fanboys drooling in their swag bags. The incredible gameplay footage even had many Sony cynics doubting that it was more than just a souped-up cinematic. If what we've seen so far is any indication, then Master Chief may have more than the Covenant and Flood to worry about. *Killzone PS3* is shaping up to be the system-seller that could have gamers ponying up for Sony's high-priced hardware.

Red leather, dual pistols and massive swords will also be in style on the PS3 in *Devil May Cry 4*, Capcom's next installment in the super-stylized, demon-slaying action series. Players can expect half-demon, half boy-band-reject Dante to bring his devil-may-care attitude and bloodletting arsenal to an all-new gothic adventure. Bullets will spray, swords will slice and Dante will once again make "The Matrix's" action scenes look like high school gymnastics, as he pulls off acrobatic butt-kicking with slick cinema style. Of course, the amped action, wicked cinematics and brutal boss battles will all be ratcheted up to match the PS3's polygon prowess, rendering visuals that'll have gamers lapping up the gorgeous gore. *DMC4's* teaser trailer offers a taste of its next-gen goods, showing Dante strutting his hell-hating skills on a breathtaking, snow-covered landscape. Consider us possessed!

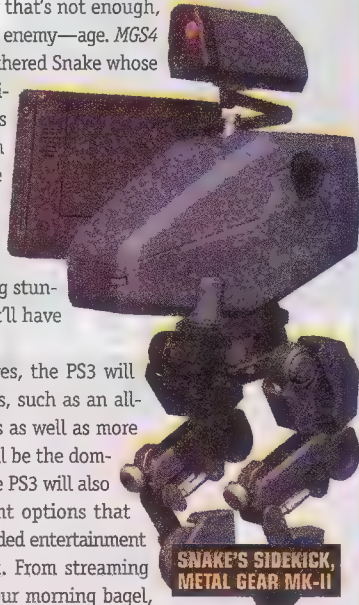


GRANDPA SNAKE Weathered façade aside, Snake still looks tough-as-nails in *MGS4*.

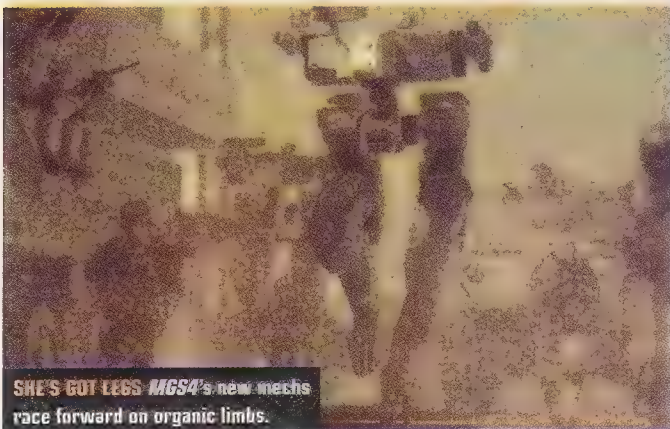
SNAKES ALIVE

Nobody sells systems like Solid Snake does. Many PS2 holdouts waited for the release of *Metal Gear Solid 2: The Sons of Liberty* before purchasing the PlayStation 2, and Sony could see a similar sales spike for the PS3 when *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* hits the console like a sonic boom. One of the most anticipated PS3 exclusives; *MGS4* will place Solid Snake in a futuristic, war-ravaged battlezone, pitting him against an all-new nightmare. Taking place after the events of *MGS2*, *Guns of the Patriots* will feature a new breed of Metal Gear. The new militant mechs represent a frightening fusion of organic and cyber technology that should keep Snake pretty busy. If that's not enough, Snake's also battling another unfamiliar enemy—age. *MGS4* will feature a much older, but well-weathered Snake whose trademark mullet has gone gray. In addition to Snake's new look, Konami's fan-favorite franchise will receive an extreme makeover, offering gamers the end-all, be-all *Metal Gear Solid* experience. Running on Sony's flashy new hardware this baby is poised to be the jewel in Sony's next-gen crown, offering stunning visuals, sound and gameplay that'll have *Metal Gear* fans wetting themselves.

In addition to must-have exclusives, the PS3 will play host to many multiplatform titles, such as an all-new chapter in the *Resident Evil* series as well as more *Final Fantasy* fun. And while games will be the dominant force behind the new console, the PS3 will also offer a variety of home entertainment options that could see consumers ditching their crowded entertainment systems for this all-in-one media box. From streaming content and video chat to toasting your morning bagel, the PS3 will offer plenty of options to the media-loving masses. Sony's high tech hardware and superb software may be getting out of the box late, but Microsoft will need more than a head start to claim digital dominance. Oh, and we were just kidding about the "bagel" thing... we think. **■ Matt Cabral**



SNAKE'S SIDEKICK, METAL GEAR MK-II



SHE'S GOT LEGS *MGS4*'s new mechs race forward on organic limbs.

NINTENDO REVOLUTION

Another console contender? Search on under secrecy



Many are quick to discount Nintendo as a true next-gen contender, citing that they've abandoned "real" games in favor of pixelated puppies and wacky handheld innovation. Still, it's hard to deny the big N's legendary status in the video game industry. Besides, where would video games be today if Mario and Donkey Kong hadn't paved the polygon path?

Nintendo has been quieter than a Shy Guy about their plans, only occasionally revealing tasty tidbits to tide over hungry gamers. The biggest revelation has been that of the controller which supports Nintendo's continued push towards non-traditional gaming. Looking more like a stylish TV remote than a gamepad, the device sports a simple interface that lends itself to casual gaming, but can be tweaked with peripherals for more complex cyber fun. It also has light sensor functionality that could have gamers swinging the curious controller to coordinate onscreen actions. How cool would it be to watch Link slice up baddies in conjunction with your swinging sword—er, controller?

Another rumored draw of the Revolution is an online interface that will allow gamers to download previous titles from Nintendo's NES, SNES and N64 libraries. These features have piqued players' interests, but it's going to take more than a lethal gamepad and old-school Mario games to persuade them to break their piggy banks. A console without software support is just an expensive paperweight.

Nintendo's secrecy surrounding the new console pales in comparison to its silence on next-gen games. However, it doesn't take Dr. Mario to diagnose that Nintendo's stable of stars will certainly be on board. This means the only place you'll be playing "revolutionary" versions of *Zelda*, *Mario* and *Metroid* will be on Nintendo's nifty new box. With the Xbox 360 already wowing fans and the PS3 hot on its tail, we assume Mario's matriarch will soon let the koopa out of the bag.

MC



REVOLUTION'S QUIRKY CONTROLLER

18 HECATOMB CCG

'X-Files' comes to new 'Hecatomb' set in the dead of winter

The end is coming. And it's here. And it's already happened. In fact, the world ends whenever you pick up a deck of pentagonal *Hecatomb* cards. The endbringer threat only multiplies with every release, and three new ones are slated for 2006.

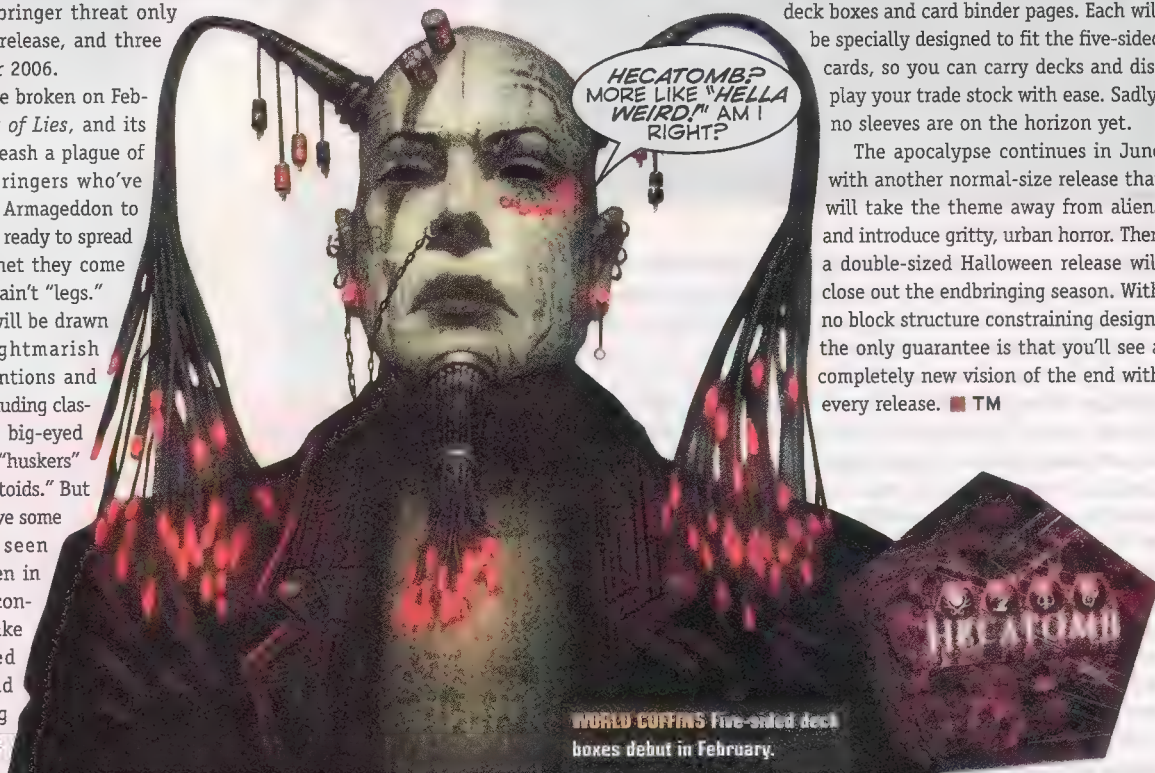
The first seal will be broken on February 21 with *Blanket of Lies*, and its 144 new cards will unleash a plague of extraterrestrial endbringers who've already brought sweet Armageddon to their own world and are ready to spread the word to every planet they come across. Hint: the word ain't "legs."

The alien menace will be drawn from a host of nightmarish extraterrestrial conventions and conspiracy theories, including classic alien races like the big-eyed "Greys," Predator-style "huskers" and hive-minded "insectoids." But each race is going to have some twists you've never seen before. Also expect Men in Black, "X-Files"-style conspiracies and a new take on relics as advanced alien technology. And when you're not battling for or against an alien

invasion, there will be new gods to worship, including The Internet.

Blanket of Lies will also bring some sorely missed accessories to the game: deck boxes and card binder pages. Each will be specially designed to fit the five-sided cards, so you can carry decks and display your trade stock with ease. Sadly, no sleeves are on the horizon yet.

The apocalypse continues in June with another normal-size release that will take the theme away from aliens and introduce gritty, urban horror. Then a double-sized Halloween release will close out the endbringing season. With no block structure constraining design, the only guarantee is that you'll see a completely new vision of the end with every release. ■ TM



BIG 2006 EVENTS & RELEASES

JANUARY

- Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game



FEBRUARY

- Blanket of Lies
- Marvel Trading Card Game



MARCH

- Blanket of Lies
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game

APRIL

- Blanket of Lies
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game



MAY

- Blanket of Lies
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game

JUNE

- Blanket of Lies
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game

SUMMER

- Blanket of Lies
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game

FALL

- Blanket of Lies
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game
- Marvel Trading Card Game

19 NARUTO CCG

Can a ninja surrounded by enemies become gaming's next big thing?

How long will it take you to become a ninja: 20 seconds? Two minutes? An hour? When Bandai brings the *Naruto CCG* to America in March, you'll find out as soon as you crack open your first few boosters. Long a favorite game in Japan, this CCG pits players against each other

in a one-on-one ninja battle. And these aren't some lame ninja turtles, either. Ninjas in the world of *Naruto* can unleash powerful special techniques called "jutsu" that would turn any hero on the half shell into seafood gumbo. Just ask our hero Naruto and his deadliest enemies. ■ TM

ENEMY #1: ZABUZA

An elite enemy of Team 7, this middle-aged member of the Akatsuki resides in the village. He has the ability to control the water around him. **Special Attack:** Water Explosive Jutsu

ENEMY #2: ROCK LEE

In a world full of deadly enemies, Rock Lee continues one of the best and most powerful warriors of the village. He has the ability to control the earth around him. **Special Attack:** Earthquake

ENEMY #3: SASUKE

The last survivor of the Uchiha clan, Sasuke and Naruto are pretty much destined to be each other's enemy. He has the ability to control the lightning around him. **Special Attack:** Lightning Jutsu

ENEMY #4: GAARA

Coming from the desert, this dark-skinned warrior has the ability to control the sand around him. **Special Attack:** Sand Jutsu

ENEMY #5: KABUTO

One of Orochimaru's disciples, this guy has the ability to control the medical jutsu around him. **Special Attack:** Medical Jutsu

ENEMY #6: KIMIMARO

Kimimaro was born with powerful jutsu and has the ability to control the forest around him. **Special Attack:** Forest Jutsu

ENEMY #7: OROCHIMARU

Orochimaru is a powerful jutsu user and has the ability to control the entire village of Konoha. **Special Attack:** Konoha Jutsu

ENEMY #8: 9-TAILED DEMON FOX

The demon inside Naruto is a powerful foe. He has the ability to control the entire village of Konoha. **Special Attack:** Konoha Jutsu

20 FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST CCG

New leaders, powerful promos and game-altering advantages give life to 'Artificial Human' set



DYNAMIC DUO With more than a dozen versions of Edward alone, we can only guess at the powerhouses 2006's three sets will add to the game.

Advantages aren't just for tennis, cheap dates and car rentals any more. They're also the brand-new card type showing up in the third *Fullmetal Alchemist* TCG set, *Artificial Human*. Advantage cards—*Magic* players, think enchantments—stick around in play like characters do and affect the whole board. The set will also have two theme decks based around Edward Elric and Alex Louis Armstrong and will also have a new series of promo cards—including a parallel foil set, chase cards and plastic transmuted cards like in the first two sets—along with it. The set, which will hit stores in the middle of February after being debuted at prerelease tourneys two weeks earlier, will contain 100 new cards for the game.

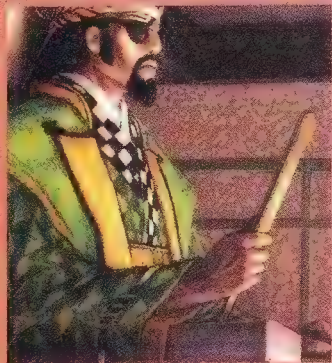
Human will cover episodes 17-22 of the anime with a focus on the 5th Laboratory and the twisted chimera and spirits in the military complex. The set contains the new loyalty mechanic and the first non-promo Level 4 versions of previous leaders. In addition to Edward and Alphonse Elric and the rest of the original characters, new leaders Shou Tucker and Armstrong join the cast as well.

After *Human* hits the scene, the *Hero's Passing* set is slated for May, with *Alchemist's Gate* on the calendar for August around the time of Gen Con. The *7 Deadly Sins* set will follow that in the fall. A special promotional set is also slated for later this year.

FMA organized play will also kick into high gear soon, with regional championships taking place during the spring and summer, culminating in the FMA world championships at Gen Con. More informal league play should just be starting up as you read this. ■ JS

21 LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS

The "Age of Enlightenment" that began with the victory of the Cranes at 2005's world championships will have far-reaching effects throughout L5R's tournaments and expansions of 2006. January's *Path of Hope* not only continues to follow the spiritual renewal of the Crane Clan but also Shadowlanders who want to be recognized by the Emperor, while May's *Drums of War* expansion explores the fallout of the Dragon/Crane war initiated in the European championships.



The regional Kotei storyline tournaments will have an upgraded importance when it comes to affecting the cards created for the game, as well. Kotei results will be integrated into the storyline immediately, appearing in a special collector set sold directly to players from Alderac beginning in June.

For the first time, players will be able to see how their actions are translated directly into new card designs. The "Age of Enlightenment" will play a major role in Kotei events, as the winner at each tournament will be able to elevate a character to enlightened status.

By year's end, expect the *Rise of the Shogun* expansion to wrap up plot threads, a special Dragon/Crane war box set and special holiday items. ■ BF

22 THE MOST EXPENSIVE RPG EVER...

...And worth every penny. At \$119.99 and 672 pages, *Ptolus: Monte Cook's City by the Spire* for d20 fantasy promises to be everything you could ever want in a roleplaying setting when it hits in August. Why's it worth half a dozen hard-earned Andrew Jacksons? Let's count the ways.

First off, this is a look inside the heads of D&D designers, and that alone is worth the price of admission; this is the original campaign setting creators used to playtest when constructing the *Third Edition* rules.

Second, you're not getting just 672 pages—all in full-color, by the way—you're also getting two dozen handouts and a double-sided poster map. Still not sold on the value? Check out the CD-ROM you get with it, which includes nearly another 400 pages of world info, a 96-page adventure, a 32-page players guide—which you can download for free right now at ptolus.com—and all kinds of player handouts. We've yet to see more bang for the gamer buck—and this an explosion. ■ BF



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23 DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

The biggest year yet for WotC's world of wizards, warriors and wyrms

This may be the year of the dog on the Chinese calendar, but as far as Wizards of the Coast is concerned, it's the "year of dragons." No kidding, that's what they're really calling it. And it's perfectly honest of them to do so. There are more important *Dungeons & Dragons* releases hap-

pening this year than possibly ever before in the game's 30-plus-year history, and the theme behind many is dragons, dragons, dragons.

Let's start with the biggest game on the horizon: *D&D Online*. The revolution has begun. Currently scheduled to go public around March, *DDO* strives to be true to the old-school die-chucking experience shared by friends around a pizza on a Friday night. Adventures will be all about you and your party exploring and adventuring in instanced space devoted entirely to them, not competing with others to see who can camp the spawn first. Experience is awarded for what you do, not just what you kill, placing equal importance on all classes and inspiring teamwork. Dice will still be important—virtual dice, though—but only when animated characters or objects come into contact; traps that can affect you can affect monsters and opponents as well, making the environment all that more important and interactive. And as a bonus, returning from the dead is a heckuva lot easier here than it ever was in the pencil-and-paper-based game through strategically placed resurrection shrines. Features like this make you realize that the designers have made it a point to include everything in the online game that made the original so fun; you can see they're as big of fans of original RPG as you are.

As massive a release as *DDO* is, it's barely the beginning of the year's announcements. Also in March, *War Drums* forges a new path for *D&D Minis*. Focusing on the theme of war (duh), the starters have been redesigned to make learning the game easier than ever before. Content will undergo a change with a new emphasis on balanced figs that are good for army-style combat, with more soldiers and captains and fewer wandering monsters. In September, Wizards of the Coast will revamp the basic RPG to bring it more in line with the minis.

The *War of the Dragon Queen* minis set will debut in July and reintroduce players to the huge-size figures first seen in 2004's *Giants of Legend*; another 12 will land in this set. And remember that comment about "year of dragons"? WotC drops the dragon bomb on minis players in June with the Gargantuan Black Dragon, which will go for about \$25 and feature a 4"-by-4" base, followed by the Colossal Red Dragon in August featuring a 6"-by-6" base and \$50 price tag; both also come with maps and playable encounters that open up the action immediately.

What? You say you want still more dragons? Then the roleplaying side of things is sure to make you one happy fantasy camper. January's *Races of the Dragon* details those descended from or related to the big wyrms, while April's *Voyage of the Golden Dragon* is an adventure set aboard an elemental skyship of the same name in Eberon. And *Dragons of Faerûn*, out in August, is a book about exactly what it says it is. Of course, all this giant-lizard love is merely the cherry on top of an RPG sundae made of killer books for the core system such as a new sequel to the *Player's Handbook* (May) and another *Monster Manual* (July). ■ **BF**

DAMSELS & DRAGONS We can only hope 2007 is the year of the babe, 'cuz it's dragons, dragons, dragons for *D&D* in 2006.

24 YU-GI-OH! CCG

Original series or "GX"? That's the "Kirk or Picard" question now with the two different *Yu-Gi-Oh!* storylines, and it's a big one. Not only has "GX" taken the

reins from the first series in the cartoon, but it's supplanted its characters in the CCG as well. Which one comes out on top? Read on and we'll let you be the judge.

Which Yu-Gi-Oh! Setting Rocks?

ORIGINAL YU-GI-OH!

Nothing beats an original. At least, that's what New Coke, "Rocky V" and "American Idol" reject Willie Hung's cover of "Hotel California" taught us. And it's true for *Yu-Gi-Oh!* too. Tons of huge, powerful dragons, super-powerful warriors and the instant-winning Exodia the Forbidden One drive a pretty hard bargain when it comes to having a cool game theme.

Even if *GX* has some cool new monsters and spells, it's gonna be tough to outdo the power cards of the first run of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* expansions. Got a bunch of problem critters about to attack you? Just Raigeki them away. Want to reanimate a powerful monster from either side of the table? Just slap down a Monster Reborn. And good luck finding anything in *GX* remotely as powerful as *Legacy of Darkness* draw phase-dumping Yata-Gorax.

And even if we're not talking about disgustingly broken cards, it'll be hard to top the humor value of being able to attack with a Hungry Burger or a Mystical Sheep. Heck, we even go nuts with our Beaver Warriors and Penguin Knights once in a while around the office. ■ Jeremy Smith

YU-GI-OH! GX

Simply put, *GX* is where the future of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* lies. We've already seen cool characters in the game from the "GX" storyline like *Lost Millennium's* Elemental Hero Flame Wingman and *Cybernetic Revolution's* Cyber Dragon. And let's not even get started with *WWXYZ-Dragon* Catapult Cannon. The original series would need an A-through-Z-Super Blaster Muzzle to even think about taking it out. And that ain't happening. If this sounds good to you, then you're in luck. Rather than just having a few *GX* cards in each, 2006's sets are completely *GX*. January gives us the *Spellcaster's Judgment* structure decks, which will contain six brand-new monsters never before released outside of Asia.

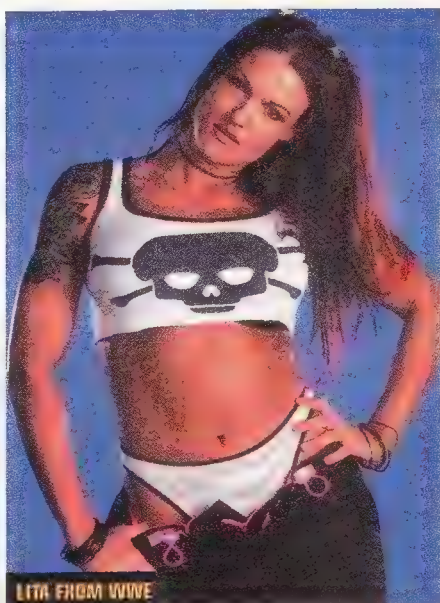
Following *Judgment* in February are the *Jaden Yuki* and *Chazz Princeton Duelist Packs*, designed to bolster *GX* decks specifically. For the uninitiated, Jaden and Chazz have taken the place of Yugi and Kaiba as the hero and antagonist in the "GX" series.

After that, the *Shadow of Infinity* set hits in March with tons of cool new *GX* monsters and spells. With all of the way-cool characters in "GX," including the Seven Assassins of Duel Academy, we'll see lots of great stuff out of *Shadow*. ■ Mike Searle



25 WWE RAW DEAL

Who would have thought that *WWE Raw Deal* would still be going strong 20 expansions later? Coming up on its six-year anniversary, *Raw Deal's* *No Way Out* expansion releases in March with 200 new cards for fans of the wrestling-based game.



LITA FROM WWE

New superstars in the set include Intercontinental Champion Carlito, the Mexicools tag team, a remake of Lita as Extreme Diva and a new version of Booker T as Booker Man. *NWO* will also include several other superstars in booster packs as well as 30 new ultra-rare foils to supplement both the new stars and previously printed ones. The set will expand upon the cheater and fan-favorite mechanics debuted in the *Royal Rumble* holiday set as well.

Later in the year, the game's 20th set, tentatively titled *Great American Bash*, is set to go on sale at Gen Con this summer. Like *No*

Way Out, it will add about 200 more cards to the game including six new superstar decks featuring new talent and *WrestleMania 22* stars. ■ JS

26 CALL OF CTHULHU CCG



DOH #1 ELDER GOD

If you thought Cthulhu's plans for world domination were fulfilled when he was named *IQ* "Man of the Year" for 2005 last issue, think again. The THIC (that's "tentacle-head in charge") has even greater plans for 2006, and it begins with a little love from his own CCG.

The *Call of Cthulhu CCG* will kick off Cthulhu's 2006 campaign in March with the final set of the *Eldritch* block: *Forgotten Cities*. The block already disgorged a platoon of insanely undercosted characters and events, including a deck that destroyed the 2005 world championship at Gen Con. The March expansion will look to end that run with a bang.

And if Gen Con 2005 was rocked by *Eldritch*, we have one word for *GC 06: Dreamlands*. We've heard it rumored that the block kicking off in June will take us beyond the wall of sleep and into some of the weirdest realms of Lovecraftian fiction. ■ TM

27 PIRATE MANIA

Buccaneer-based games set sail to plunder collectible seas



TREASURE ISLAND "Dead Man's Chest," the "Pirates" movie sequel, will have both an official TCG tie-in and an "unofficial" CSG release.

There's so much booty hitting the gaming scene in the next year that even Cap'n Crunch seems like a viable CCG property. And if you can't wait until July 7 for the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie sequel, "Dead Man's Chest," don't worry. After the smashing success of "Curse of the Black Pearl," it seems like everyone has pirate fever.

WizKids kicks off the pirate mania in February with *Pirates of the South China Seas*, which pits the new Jade Rebellion faction against the Americans, British, French and Spanish in pursuit of hidden booty. In addition to showcasing Chinese junks like the Grand Dynasty and the Divine Wind, *Seas* also features smaller, nimbler Korean turtle ships like the Admiral Yi and the Noble Swan. Famous characters such as Captain James Cook and Commodore Matthew Perry show up here too, as does a new super-rare version of El Fantasma.

Following up on *Seas* is WizKids' 2006 convention exclusive, the Chinese Treasure Ship. If you thought the *MechWarrior DropShip* was huge, check this out: this baby is a 10-mast behemoth that has the relative size of an aircraft carrier! It'll be debuting in March, while in the summer, an as-yet-unnamed set will hit the scene too.

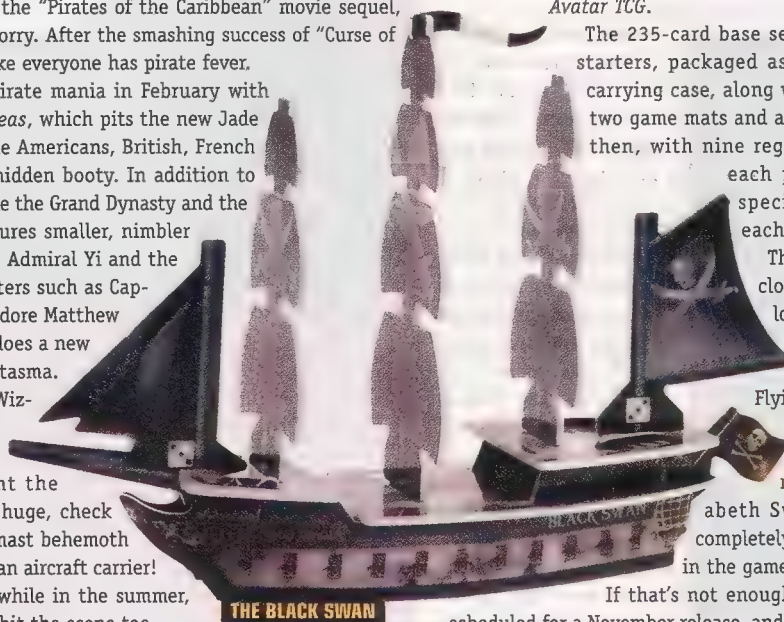
In the meantime, though, Upper Deck will be releasing its officially licensed *Pirates of the Caribbean TCG* in May. The game will use the Quick-

strike game system, which is similar to the Freestyle system used previously in the *Shaman King TCG* and which will also be used in January's *Avatar TCG*.

The 235-card base set will launch with *The Briny Deep* starters, packaged as two 30-card decks in a hot new carrying case, along with two slide-open chamber cards, two game mats and a rulebook. Boosters will also release then, with nine regular cards plus a chamber card in each pack. The game will also feature special doubloon cards that enhance each pirate in the game.

Thematically, Upper Deck's game sticks closely to the movie, with players following the adventures of Captain Jack Sparrow, whose mission is to find a way out of his debt to the ghostly Flying Dutchman captain Davey Jones or else be condemned to Davey's eternal servitude. Characters from the movies, including Will Turner and Elizabeth Swann, appear in the game, as do completely new pirates and lands only available in the game.

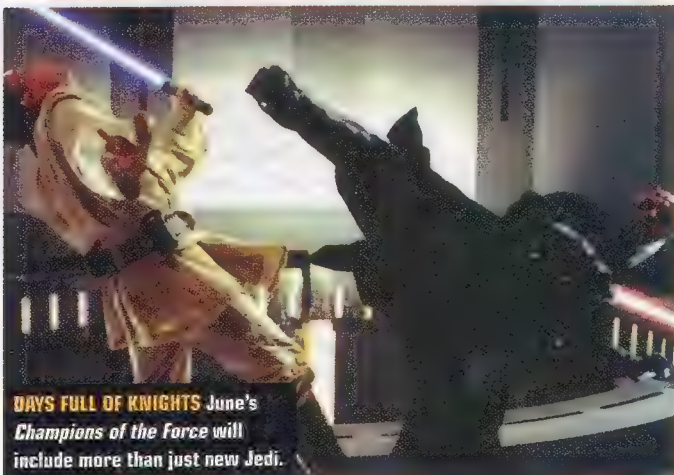
If that's not enough for ya, a second *Pirates TCG* set is scheduled for a November release, and another *Pirates CSG* set should hit for WizKids in the fall. It's enough to make any scurvy knave shout, "Yo ho ho!" ■ JS



THE BLACK SWAN

28 STAR WARS MINIATURES

Awesome Jedi, huge figs and starfighters
Force us to take notice of all the small things



DAYS FULL OF KNIGHTS June's *Champions of the Force* will include more than just new Jedi.

With Darth "Not-So-Pretty-Anymore" Vader ending the Jedi and the world's most popular movie franchise in "Episode III," *Star Wars Minis* is finally free to explore the expanded universe that has sprung up in Lucas' property. It's going far beyond the movies with the first booster expansion in nearly a year coming on June 5: *Champions of the Force*.

Focusing on the war between Jedi and Sith throughout the ages, *Champions* will have more lightsabers than any set before it. It'll pull in Jedi not just from the movies, but from the cartoons, novels, Dark Horse comics and video games from *Republic Commando* to *Knights of the Old Republic*. Well worth the wait, *Champions* will take the game far deeper into Star Wars lore than any set before as some of the universe's most loved characters make their *Minis* debut.

But before that release, February's nonrandom *Attack on Endor* will make bigger better. \$19.99 buys an alternate-pose, alternate-paint version of one of 2005's hottest minis—the Imperial AT-ST—and a team of stormtroopers. But the 32-page scenario book reworks the rules for huge-friendly 200-point teams and comes with two double-sided cardboard maps that'll let you use those behemoths without fear of impassable doorways.

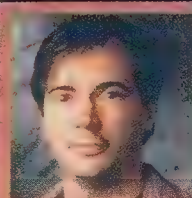
That huge-friendly environment will be important when *Bounty Hunters* comes for your scalp in September. Focusing on the "scum and villainy" of Star Wars, it will bring many fringe elements into the game, as well as a bunch of huge figures. Again, look for some of the most missed minis to make their first appearance in this expansion.

Perhaps the biggest *Star Wars Minis* release of '06 won't appear until November.

That's when *Galactic Conquests* takes these d20 minis rules into space with an all starship expansion. With Jedi, huge figs and star battles on the horizon, 2006 will be one heck of a year to play in George's universe. ■ TM

RICHARD GARFIELD Q&A

A 'Rocketville' launch leaves 'Magic' in the dust



QUEST: How's Rocketville different from other board games?

GARFIELD: *Rocketville* is very European in some respects and U.S. in others. One of my pet peeves with many of these types of games is that they are too scientific—I feel like I can't win unless I spend oodles of time grinding through numbers. *Rocketville* has a lot of the skill of these games, but also a lot more luck and hidden information.

WHY ARE YOU WORKING ON MY FAVORITE MAGIC SET?

I did a lot of work on the most recent set [*Ravnica*], but haven't worked on a *Magic* set for about a year now. Probably I will be put on another set within six months, and my capacity will be to generate lots and lots of card concepts—some of which will eventually make it to print.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MAGIC CARD AT ALL TIMES?

Wyluli Wolf. It is a sentimental favorite, as it was named for my fiancée—now wife. Game mechanically my favorite card is "Goblin Gatling Gun," which got printed as [*Onslaught's*] Goblin Sharpshooter.

DO YOU EVER PLAN ON DEVELOPING A RAVENLOFT GAME OR A DARKNESS HORSE?

I hope to do an RPG one day. I was working on several before Wizards bought TSR and really lessened the need. As far as computer games go, I have been working on them for about 10 years, but they keep being canceled or changed beyond recognition. My current project with Microsoft looks promising, and I have one with Nintendo, and a couple with small independent workshops. My designs are always far enough out of the mainstream that when it comes to spending millions of dollars someone always gets nervous. We will see.

WHO'S THE MOST FEARFUL THING YOU IN PETER MAGNUS?

That's hard to say. Peter is a very strategic and focused player when he applies himself, and when he is playing a game he is competitive enough that he will apply himself. When I put my mind to it I come up with strategies that can surprise the biggest sharks—but I tend to play around and experiment a lot of the time. ■ **Chris Ward**



Goblin Sharpshooter

29 UNIVERSAL FIGHTING SYSTEM CCG

One set of rules, two of the most violent games on Earth and the funniest comic in history make for one of the most anticipated releases of 2006

Could Goku kick Superman's ass? Ever since *Ani-Mayhem's Set 0* let players pit Tenchi against Ranma 10 years ago, CCGs have tried to let gamers answer such fundamental questions. Granted, licensors with a eyeful of *Yu-Gi* money have kept us from reaching true cross-property perfection, but many games have delivered at least a sliver of "what if?" fan service.

By the end of its three-set run, *Ani-Mayhem* let its players live out their anime deathmatch fantasies with characters from "Bubblegum Crisis," Tenchi Muyo," "Ranma 1/2," "El Hazard," "Armitage III," "Dominion Tank Police," "Phantom Quest Corp.," "Project A-Ko" and "Dragon Ball Z." A strong lineup? That depends on how much of a mid-'90s otaku you were, but it got the cross-property ball rolling. A series of system-based CCGs followed, which use one rule set across multiple games to let you play out the battles you hypoth-

esize whenever you and a bud stop for Slurpees. Wizards of the Coast's *ARC System* put the heroes of "Xena" and "Hercules" head-to-head with *C-23*, for which Jim Lee created a new comic book. True Marvel-vs.-DC comic combat was successfully done for the first time just a couple years ago in Upper Deck's *Vs. System*, and video games have even gotten in on the act with Score's *Street Fighter vs. Mortal Kombat Epic Battles*.

Now Sabertooth Games is taking its shot at cross-property success with the *Universal Fighting System*. This CCG will launch in April with separate *Street Fighter* and *Soul Calibur* sets, two of the most hardcore fighting video games. But in February, the thumb-pad faithful will get a preview with the 45-card *Penny Arcade Battle Box*. So what makes these *UFS* fighting games worth fighting for? ■ TM

STREET FIGHTER

The origin of modern fighting video games, Capcom's *Street Fighter* franchise introduced the idea of special moves and combos in a series of early '90s arcade hits featuring one-on-one combat in a bare-knuckle martial arts tournament. No weapons, fatalities or gimmicks needed. Some players can dial in the convoluted finger jerks required to pull off moves like Ryu's fireball and Chun-Li's upside-down spinning leg kick better than their own ATM pins.

SOUL CALIBUR

A *UFS* exclusive, the colorful characters of *Soul Calibur* bring weapon martial arts to video life like no game ever has. In it, noble knights, pirates, genetic mutants, ninjas and a few characters that aren't so easy to categorize battle to gain control of the ultimate weapon, a blade called the Soul Calibur that's imbued with such evil that it enslaves the wielder's soul. We're also sure it'll make a kick-ass card.

PENNY ARCADE

The pen may not be mightier than the *Soul Calibur*, but what about a cardboard tube? That's what's coming when the *Penny Arcade Battle Box* sticks the first quarter in this arcade gaming CCG. Cards like Tube Strike, Hide Behind the Couch and Fruit F#@ler in the hands of Gabe and Tycho. Is there a place for Unsportsman-like Conduct in CCGs? There is in this one, along with Oneupsmanship, Hijinks and the dreaded Really Big Word!



30 LORD OF THE RINGS TCG

King Kong has bashed aside Balrog and Bilbo, at least in director Peter Jackson's WETA movie studios for the time being. No worries for card gamers, though: the *Lord of the Rings* TCG property from Decipher has plenty more in store for this year. Kicking off the game's 2006 releases is the *Rise of Saruman* set, the second set in the *Hunters* block. Expect Saruman and his lackeys to make a breakout performance in this set to expand on the block's hunter, threat and site control mechanics. A new mechanic called thwart will also debut here.

In July, the *Treachery and Deceit* expansion will hit stores, finishing off the *Hunters* block and rounding out the block's mechanics. After that, *The Great Eye* base set begins the next block in November with a complete new spin on the game. ■ JS



SARUMAN AND WORMTONGUE

31 DUEL MASTERS CCG

Multicolor has been a sure-fire winner for *Magic* over the years, and now *Duel Masters* is about to get in on the act with a year full of rainbow releases, which is *DM's* way of saying multicolor.

Fatal Brood of Infinite Ruin is on sale now with some great race-themed toys. It was one of the most influential releases in Japan, and its Americanization hasn't changed a single card. Then the rainbow madness starts on April 7 with *Shockwave of the Shattered Rainbow*. The set will bring multicolor excitement, with cards that tap into the flavor of several races at once and which can also produce multicolor mana when played to your mana zone.



The rainbow theme continues throughout the year

with July 7's *Blastoplosion of Gigantic Rage* and an October set yet to be named. The block will be capped early next year, as the January 2007 expansion will be the last rainbow release. ■ TM

32 MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLEPLAYING GAMES

'NWN 2,' 'WoW's first expansion and a new Marvel game lead the Internet charge

Gamers will need to invest more than the requisite 40 hours per week if they plan on keeping up with all the massively multiplayer fun clogging the broadband pipeline in '06. From *Star Wars* to superheroes, players should be leveling-up and questing way past their bed times on these highlights:

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS 2

This sequel to 2002's groundbreaking RPG adds immersive online options that will have you losing just as much sleep as Azeroth's dedicated dwellers. *Neverwinter Nights 2's* brilliant blend will offer a deeper single-player experience, hefty online options and intuitive editing tools allowing creative questers to build and share their levels with the online community. The improved module-building mechanics are nearly identical to the tools used



NEVERWINTER NIGHTS 2

by the game's designers, giving players the freedom to scale characters and create much more detailed environments. *NWN2* will enhance the best features from the original game while adding new touches such as updated graphics, a warlock class and a tweaked 3.5 Edition *D&D* rule set.

STAR WARS GALAXIES

If you're one of the frustrated fans that logged through several hours of *Galaxies* only to discover that battling countless womp rats isn't much fun, you may want to return to Tatooine. LucasArts is giving their spacefaring franchise an overhaul that includes ongoing improvements to the combat interface, character classes and level designs. They're also promising two expansions a year and a variety of other upgrades that should have fans finally feeling the Force.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT: BURNING CRUSADE

Those who know Azeroth like the back of their battle-scarred hands can look forward to a hearty helping of new content to devour when *Burning Crusade* hits. The new Blood Elf race offers priest, mage, rogue, warlock, warrior and hunter classes. This powerful, but near extinct race seeks to reclaim their once promising destiny in Outland, a brand new orc-inhabited continent accessible through the Dark Portal. Between the new character races and the new continent, players will barely find the time to indulge in the new Jewelcrafting profession.

MARVEL MMORPG

Marvel and Microsoft are exhausting all their super powers to guard the details of this highly anticipated Xbox 360 exclusive. But you can bet your utility belt that the multiplayer mayhem will encompass many of Marvel's favorite friends, foes and environments. ■ MC

33 POKÉMON TRADING FIGURE GAME

The world of Pokémon goes 3D in Europe

We've had the *Pokémon TCG* here in the United States for nearly seven years now—and it's been in Japan for longer—but for once, the Europeans and Australians are getting a leg up on us. Nintendo, in partnership with Japanese model company Kaiyodo, will be releasing the *Pokémon Trading Figure Game* in those countries in a couple of months.

Play is thematically similar to that in the TCG, with a spinning dial mechanism replacing the decks of cards. Players will each have active pokémon duking it out as well as reserve pokémon on their benches, just like in the card game. The game also

includes trainer cards and special conditions like asleep, poisoned and confused that can affect monsters. The base set will contain more than 40 different pokémon, plus special rare figures. Among the monsters included in the game are original-series pokémon Pikachu, Charizard and Meowth and newer ones like Feraligatr, Mudkip, Torchic, Treecko and Murkrow.

Each starter set will include six pokémon figs—with four fixed and two random—plus a trainer figure, a playmat and a rulebook. Boosters will contain two figures plus trainer cards.

The base set for the *Pokémon TFG* will hit Europe in the spring, with the game's first expansion slated for this summer. No plans are currently set for a release in the United States, but expect the game to make its way here if the figures do anywhere near as well as the TCG did. ■ JS

TWIST AND SHOUT Spin-dial Pokémon figures scream out for American release.

34 AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER CCG

In a universe where it's an everyday occurrence for people to bend fire, water, air and earth to their wills, only young Aang has the ability to twist all of them to his purposes. This is the setting behind Upper Deck's newest CCG, based on Nickelodeon's homegrown, anime-style cartoon "Avatar: The Last Airbender."

Gamers may notice similarities with the *Shaman King TCG*, and that's on purpose. Many of the mechanics found in *Shaman King's* "Freestyle" system evolved into Avatar's "Quickstrike" system, the new rules platform that will be found in many future UDE CCGs, including this summer's *Pirates of the Caribbean TCG*.

However, the Quickstrike platform does not mean every new game will play identically. While *Avatar* will use the same kind of hidden "chamber cards" as *Shaman King*—which slide out to reveal hidden abilities—new rules allow each character access to a different type of elemental strike, represented in new "zenemental" foil cards that will further identify and power up that character with his element of choice. ■ BF

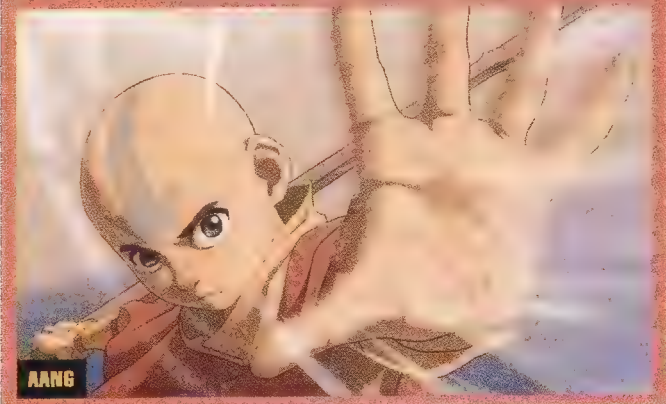


35 FANTASY FLIGHT BOARD GAMES

Arkham Horror, Descent, Doom and World of Warcraft made 2005 one of the strongest years for board gaming in a long time, and Fantasy Flight is following it up with another ambitious roster.

The onslaught starts this spring with the release of *Marvel Heroes*, a minis-focused board game that FF calls the ultimate Marvel universe strategy game. *Marvel Heroes* will be accompanied by *Arkham Horror's* *Dunwich Horror* expansion, which brings a map of Dunwich to the game along with new characters and Great Old Ones, and a new Bruno Faidutti game called *Argo*. In it, a group of astronauts try to survive an attack by horrific alien monsters, all represented by plastic minis.

Also look for \$29.95 deluxe editions of *Cave Troll* and *Drakon*, a revamp of *Warrior Knights*, the *Storm of Swords* expansion to the *A Game of Thrones* board game, an expansion for *Twilight Imperium Third Edition* and a bunch of property-based games they can't announce yet. ■ TM



36 MECHWARRIOR: DOMINATION

Battlebots meet their real-world counterparts

With a new base set for WizKids' 'bot-bashing' minis game landing in January, we decided it was time to really put the mechs through their paces. And while most magazines would road test these weapons of mass destruction against each other, we decided to see if they'd dominate against real threats. ■ BF

MECH

OPPONENT



Donald Trump, Billionaire
 (Real Estate, The Apprentice)
 (Fortune)



WINNER: "Fortune" Nyx



Carl's MoneyMaker, World Poker Tour Champ
 (World Poker Tour, MoneyMaker)



HEYA!

WINNER: "Diamond Jack" Solitaire



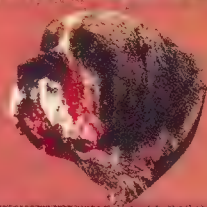
Thor, Norse God of Thunder
 (Marvel Comics, Thor)
 (Marvel Comics, Thor)



WINNER: Draw



Cujo, Disposed St. Bernard
 (Baywatch, Cujo)



WINNER: "Fortune" Nyx



Jessica Alba, regular sex
 (Baywatch, Jessica Alba)



EVEN MY HEAD IS DESIRABLE.

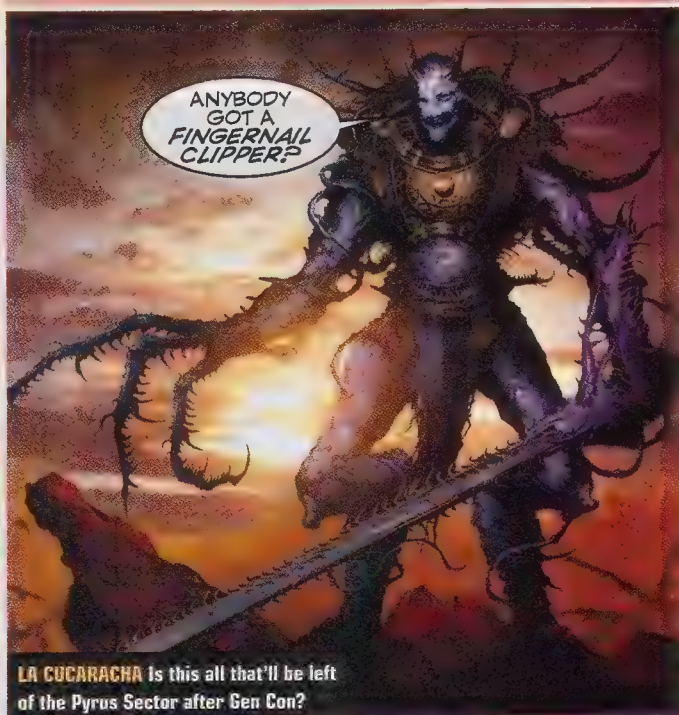
WINNER: Alba... sigh

FINAL COUNT: Mechs dominate, 3-1. But the loss isn't their fault. We've got to see the man or mech that can take down Jessica.

37 WARHAMMER CCGS

'Dark Millennium' destroys a galaxy;

'War Cry' creates a game



LA CUCARACHA Is this all that'll be left of the Pyrus Sector after Gen Con?

Whether you're a fan of orks in space or just orks with maces, it's going to be a year of change for Warhammer as *Dark Millennium* storyline tournaments simmer to a head at Gen Con and *War Cry* spins off a whole new game.

War Cry received a makeover in January with the *War of Attrition* base set, which essentially reprinted all of the coolest cards ever. But come the spring, roughly in time with May's *Marks of Power* expansion, Sabertooth is going to begin distributing campaign kits that come with maps and rules to turn *War Cry* into a customizable board game where players can recruit any cards from their deck, not just the one on top, to fight over random locations. Initially, the campaign kits will only be available to tournament organizers, but there are plans to sell them directly to consumers through the Sabertooth website in the future. *War Cry* expansions in August and November will round out the year.

On the starfaring front, Warhammer 40,000 *Dark Millennium* storyline events are just beginning to unfold. As events in the Pyrus sector boil to a head at Gen Con, it will have huge consequences for future releases, including the death of major characters and possible abandonment of the sector if it's overrun by forces too unspeakable to mention.

With Erebus, Inquisitor Eisenhorn and even a corrupted sister in the region, some of the most explosive forces in the universe are set to turn Pyrus into a pyrrhic victory regardless of the winner. And all of that doesn't even touch on *Dark Millennium*'s '06 expansions. Inquisitor Eisenhorn and Speed Freaks are on their way in February's *Hope's Twilight*, and three expansions will follow in April, July and

October. October will be the big'un, with a large portion of the cards tied to the events at Gen Con and starters that'll reflect the new situation. ■ TM



DWARF RUNNER






FEBRUARY 2006

38 **AXIS & ALLIES MINIS**

Bombers, fighters and massive armament invade military minis game

Axis & Allies Miniatures takes the fight to your enemies, and the kitchen table, with five releases over the course of 2006. And Wizards of the Coast's first A&A release is a doozy: *Contested Skies* will bring planes to the

game on March 24, with five screaming new units that make air superiority crucial to any successful campaign. Here are the planes we're gonna see, along with their real-world stats. Sadly, the Spitfire is left in its hangar. ■ **TM**

PLANE	NATIONALITY	TYPE	WINGSPAN	MAXIMUM SPEED	ARMAMENT	WHY IT'S COOL
 IL-10 Sturmovik	Russian	Bomber	44 feet	330 MPH	Two wing-mounted 23 mm autocannons, two wing-mounted 7.62 mm machine guns, one rear turret-mounted 12.7 mm machine gun and up to a 13,000 lb bombing payload	Because the IL-10 is one of the most advanced models in this game, with a service life that saw more action in Korea than WWII.
 P-51 Mustang	USA	Fighter/Bomber	37 feet	437 MPH	Six .50 caliber machine guns, 10.5" rockets and up to a 2,000 lb bombing payload	This fighter's long range lets it escort our bombers all the way to Berlin, and it should be the best at taking out tanks and soldiers.
 Messerschmitt Bf 109	German	Fighter/Bomber	32.5 feet	450 MPH	Two 13 mm machine guns, one 30 mm autocannon, two WGr 21 rockets, one 250 kg and four 50 kg bombs	Should keep those Allied aces from cheese-baling your King Tigers from the air.
 Mitsubishi A6M Zero	Japanese	Fighter	39 feet	336 MPH	Two 7.7 mm machine guns, two 20 mm autocannons, two 65 lb. and one 132 lb. bombs, two fixed 550 lb. bombs for kamikaze runs	Kamikaze should let you take out enemy units over 1.5 times down.
 Junkers JU 87G Stuka	German	Bomber	45 feet	214 MPH	Two forward-mounted 7.92 mm machine guns, two forward-mounted 33 mm autocannons, one rear-mounted 7.92 mm machine gun	Because this model is specifically the anti-tank version, perfect for dealing with T-34s and Easy Eight.

Inuyasha anime © Rumiko Takahashi / Shogakukan • Yumilun TV • Sunrise 2000. Messerschmitt, Mitsubishi, Junkers © USAF Museum.

39 **INUYASHA TCG**

Timeless champions return in February's 'Saisei'

A couple hundred cards is never enough to work with when a game is being designed by a true fan of its property, and that's been exactly the case with *Inuyasha*. Now Garrett Wilkinson, the game's lead designer and a huge *Inuyasha* fan, has a second chance to incorporate some of those overlooked moments from the anime when the 170-card *Saisei* revisits the show's first 85 episodes.

According to Wilkinson, the "entire story from the show is now in the game." *Saisei* covers a massive block of time, and it's going to explore some things that were overlooked in previous sets. For example, there are several episodes where Inuyasha visits the present and meets Kagome's family early in the series, and those lead to cards like Kagome's Refrigerator.

Saisei is also a chance for Wilkinson to revisit some of the relationships, always the centerpiece of *Inuyasha*'s anime, that haven't been explored in the game. For example, Koga's earlier incarnations have all worked with the wolf deck, but for a while

he was a love interest for Kagome. So *Saisei* will have a version that works with Kagome and Inuyasha. Character relationships will also be central to the cycle of "timeless champions."

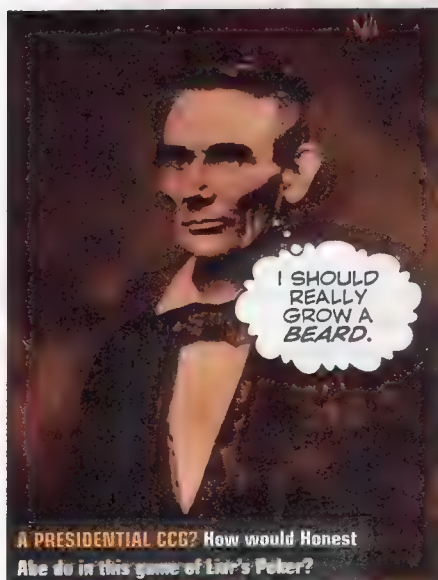
"Characters in the show work in pairs," said Wilkinson. To reflect that, the timeless champions are a series of the show's key character pairs—Inuyasha and Kagome, etc.—who work better when the other side of the pair is in play. This series will also bring some of the most popular character back to the game, such as Miroku, Sango, Shippo and Kirara.

Between the timeless champions, two new Rumiko Takahashi autograph cards and Wilkinson's dedication to the show, this set will have as many goodies for *Inuyasha* fans as it does for gamers when it releases on February 22. Two additional expansions will round out 2006 in the summer and fall. ■ **TM**



KAGOME AND INUYASHA

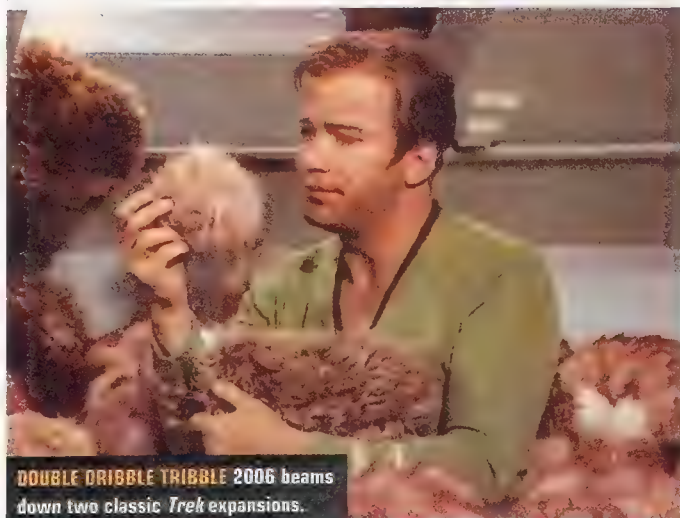
40 HIGH STAKES DRIFTER CCG



When WizKids tapped into the heat behind poker in 2005, they cashed in on the phenomenon with an Old West-themed CCG. Now they're ready to spread the wealth. *High Stakes Drifter's* follow-up release mines the glory days of the California Gold Rush and focuses on non-cowboy dudes for the first time.

Back in the 1840s, a buck was a buck or, more accurately, a buck was more than 20 in today's money. And the entire California population played an old-fashioned version of *Lotto* as they sifted

through streams and dug up mineshafts for specks of gold. The new *High Stakes Drifter* set will showcase Gold Rush-era personalities, so we could expect famous authors, soldiers and showmen such as Mark Twain, Ulysses S. Grant and P.T. Barnum. Heck, even Abe Lincoln is fair game for this late spring/early summer expansion. ■ BF



41 STAR TREK CCG

James T. Kirk will boldly go where he hasn't been in a while. We've seen plenty of sets in Decipher's *Star Trek CCG* covering "The Next Generation," "Deep Space Nine," "Voyager" and "Enterprise," but not a whole lot lately that touches upon the original series. That'll change in April, when *These Are The Voyages* releases. The set's still in development, but will include enough of Kirk, Spock, McCoy and the rest of the original bridge crew to satiate any original show fanatic's appetite.

Following on *Voyages'* heels in August is *In a Mirror, Darkly*. It's an off-kilter title, but the fan contest-winning name is fitting for the set, in which everything is just a little bit wacky. Yep, Spock's got a goatee in this one, in case you were wondering.

In the meantime, Decipher will be releasing loads of new promo cards for the game through methods including booster wrapper redemptions, preorder specials and tournament prizes. ■ JS

42 THE VIDEO GAMES WE CAN'T WAIT TO PLAY

Every gamer should try his hand at these festivals of sniping, sword-swinging and screaming

1. HALO 3 (Xbox 360)

Microsoft and Bungie aren't sharing yet, but you can bet your Warthog that this next installment will feature great visuals, a suspenseful story and enough Covenant scum to keep Master Chief's carbine smoking.

2. UNTOLD LEGENDS: THE WARRIOR'S CODE (PSP)

This sequel to PSP action/RPG favorite *Untold Legends: Brotherhood of the Blade* will offer improved graphics and more dungeon-crawling and troll-slaying fun for on-the-go questers.

3. TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND (Xbox 360, PS2, PS3)

Lovely Lara Croft returns to consoles with an all-new adventure supported by a graphical and game play overhaul. Expect smoother controls and a more refined Lara. But don't worry; she's still got polygons in all the right places.

Building on the smooth game play and slick style of *RE4*, this new chapter plans on raising the zombie-slaughtering satisfaction to new hellish heights. This next-gen gore-fest puts the "horror" back in the "survival horror" genre.

4. RESIDENT EVIL 5 (Xbox 360, PS3)

The diabolical dudes behind the *Diablo* series offer an all-new demon hunt set in a near-future London overrun by hell's angry army. Players are immersed in a 3D, first-person adventure with upgradeable weapons and tons of deep RPG elements.

5. HELLGATE: LONDON (PC)

Nintendo finally delivers the Zelda game fans have been begging for. A mature Link and a darker story support the same satisfying action and game play that fans have come to expect. Oh, and did we mention that Link can morph into a wolf!

6. THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS (Nintendo)

John Woo and Chow Yun Fat join forces to deliver a truly cinematic gaming experience infused with high-octane martial arts action and stylish gunplay. Players can expect this powerful pedigree to deliver some "Hard-boiled" play.

7. STRANGLEHOLD (Xbox 360, PS3)

Don't let the name fool you. This isn't your typical "war" game or WWII fragger. Nope, it's an intense sci-fi shooter that'll have trigger-happy gamers peering down the sights at frightening enemies that are more macabre than military.

8. BEARS OF WAR (Xbox 360)

What could be more promising than a sci-fi RPG from the folks that brought us *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* and *Jade Empire*? Well... nothing. Expect expansive galaxies, awesome aliens and an immersive adventure. Beam us up!

9. MASS EFFECT (Xbox 360)

What could be more promising than a sci-fi RPG from the folks that brought us *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* and *Jade Empire*? Well... nothing. Expect expansive galaxies, awesome aliens and an immersive adventure. Beam us up!

10. SUPERMAN RETURNS: THE VIDEOGAME (Xbox 360, PS3)



We'd rather suffer the fatal effects of kryptonite than play previous Superman games. This one's different. Smooth flight controls, a massive interactive Metropolis and vile DC Comics villains are just a few reasons why we're ready to get our capes dirty. ■ MC

43 THE BIGGEST FILMS

'Superman Returns,' 'Eragon,' 'X-Men 3': The flicks fans must see in 2006

If you're a gamer and film fanatic, this year is so sweet your teeth are probably rotting right now. Besides flicks such as "Bloodrayne," "Dungeon Siege," and "DOA: Dead or Alive," there are tons of reasons why us sci-fi and fantasy fans will never need to leave the theater to keep the adrenaline high. Though all dates are subject to change, here're our picks for the best the year has to offer.

'Superman Returns'

It's been 19 years since Big Blue made us believe a man could fly. Now, he's back with the director that made "X-Men" a blockbuster (Bryan Singer), an Oscar-winner (Kevin Spacey, not Gene Hackman) as Lex Luthor and one of the hottest women in film (Kate Bosworth) as Lois Lane. Up, up and away, baby! **June 30.**

'A Scanner Darkly'

In this take on the book from Philip K. Dick (the guy behind "Blade Runner"), Keanu Reeves stars as an undercover cop hooked on the drug Substance D, which causes split personalities. The catch? Reeves has another personality who is also a notorious dealer in the stuff. The bizarrely animated trailer has us hooked.

September 16.

1

'Eragon'

Based on the new classic by then-teen author Christopher Paolini, the film follows up the plot of the book as the farmboy Eragon must take up the role of dragon knight against the evil king Galbatorix when one of the long-thought extinct dragons falls into his lap. **June 16.**

'Spy Hunter'

Two words: John Woo. Sure, the film based on the video game stars the Rock, and sure, it's got the super-hot car with enough gadgets (and the ability to transform into a speedboat or motorcycle) to make James Bond green with envy. But with Woo at the helm, Alec Sects' mission to take out the NOSTRA crime syndicate is sure to be brimming with cinematic action. **Summer 2006.**

'Underworld: Evolution'

If you liked the first one, the sequel will have even more action and blood-sucking, as vampire Selene (Kate Beckinsale) and vampire/werewolf hybrid Michael (Scott Speedman) investigate the ancient origins of the vampire-lycan wars while fighting for survival against both camps. Beckinsale revisits skin-tight leather... We'd pay to watch that with the sound off. **January 20.**

'X3'

Brett Ratner ("Rush Hour") takes over the directing reins for the next stop in this fantastic franchise that finally introduces us to such characters as Beast, Angel and Juggernaut. When a scientist discovers a "cure" for the mutant gene, Magneto and friends set out to destroy the researcher and her work, and only the X-Men can stand against them. **May 26.**

'Silent Hill'

Spooky. Super spooky. Like "The Ring" on steroids. Frantic Rose (Radha Mitchell, "Pitch Black") searches for terminally ill daughter Sharon in the not-so-normal town of Silent Hill, home to a variety of demonic inhabitants and a seemingly intelligent "Darkness" (note the capital "D") that transforms everything it touches. **April 21. ■ BF**

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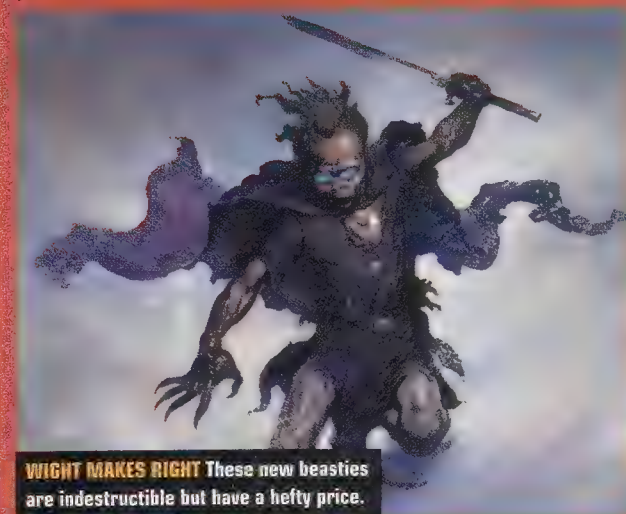
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CUT ABOVE THE REST 1. Superman Returns; 2. A Scanner Darkly; 3. X-Men 3; 4. Underworld: Evolution.

Superman Returns © Warner Bros. Pictures. A Scanner Darkly © Warner Independent Pictures. Underworld: Evolution © Sony Pictures. X-Men 3 © Twentieth Century Fox.

A GAME OF THRONES

"We're not going to make any of the Others as characters," said Eric Lang, lead designer of the *A Game of Thrones CCG*, about the harbingers of winter that are sure to factor heavily in *Winter Edition's* final set, *A Song of Night*. After all, "it's kind of unflavorful to have the Others



WIGHT MAKES RIGHT These new beasts are indestructible but have a hefty price.

fighting in *A Game of Thrones* for you." But their tainted touch will be all over the expansion with the introduction of wights. These are unkillable characters, but every one you control increases your doomed total by one, and at five you lose the game. Some cards will also kill characters and turn them into wights, with the same abilities. But that's not the only theme in *ASoN*.

"I'm going to print the best buff cards [cards that temporarily boost a stat] we've ever done in the history of the game," said Lang. Those

will tie into a new series of threshold cards that will give characters increasing bonuses depending on how high a particular stat is. The threshold cards will tend to be attachments and locations that interact with characters. If that character's target stat is over 4, it gets the first bonus, over 6 it gets a second bonus and over 8 it gets three bonuses. For plots, this set will focus on doomed battlefields, mostly final battles, which is a fine way to finish off the *Winter Edition*.

The tale picks back up in August with *Seven Kingdoms Edition*, and its first expansion is slated to end the *AGoT* year in November. **TM**

45 VAMPIRE: THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE CCG

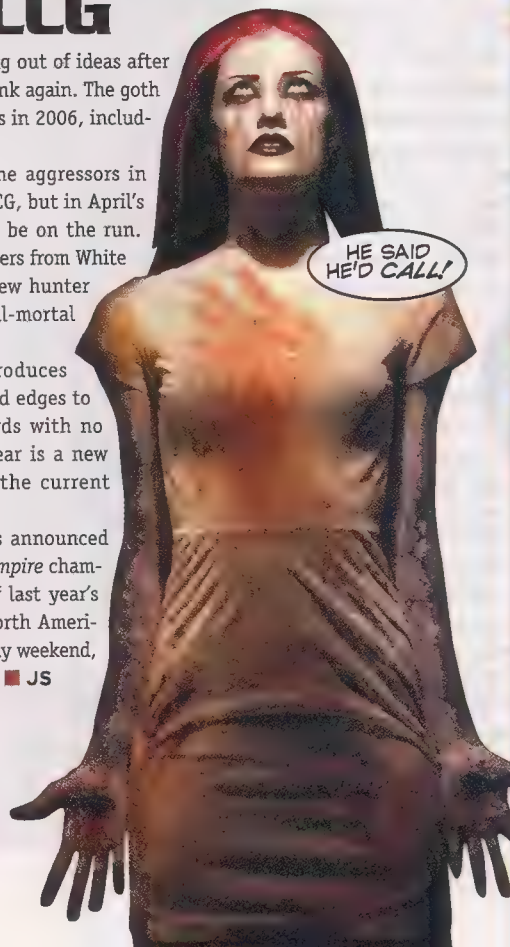
If you think that White Wolf may be running out of ideas after more than a decade of CCG bloodsuckers, think again. The goth gods from Atlanta have big plans for the clans in 2006, including a new major tournament.

Vampires are generally used to being the aggressors in White Wolf's *Vampire: The Eternal Struggle CCG*, but in April's *Nights of Reckoning*, they're the ones who'll be on the run. The new expansion integrates the mortal hunters from White Wolf's *Hunter: The Reckoning* RPG with 20 new hunter crypt cards that can either be played in all-mortal decks or combined with vampires.

The 60-card booster-only set also introduces seven new disciplines—known as virtues and edges to the hunters—and will contain all-new cards with no reprints. Also on the slate for later this year is a new Sabbat-themed base set to follow up on the current *Camarilla Edition*.

On the tournament side, White Wolf has announced that it's adding another tournament to the *Vampire* championships due to the immense popularity of last year's Gen Con world championship contest. The North American championships will take place Columbus Day weekend, October 9, tentatively scheduled for Atlanta. **JS**

THE BLOOD HUNTS BACK The hunters from *Reckoning* crash *V:TES* in this spring's *Nights of Reckoning*.



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46 ZATCH BELL TCG

Japan's biggest-selling expansion brings the Majestic 12 to the U.S. Not the super-secret group of UFO scientists reportedly known as Majestic 12; that would be silly. This Majestic 12 is a mysterious team of beings with superhuman powers who come to Zatch's Japan from the United States. All 12 make their debut in March's *The Gathering Storm*.

In game terms, MJ 12 is a new card type numbered MJ-001 through MJ-012 in the set. You play them to the battlefield, but they can't be attached to a mamodo and you don't need a specific mamodo in play to use them. You also can't have more than one copy of the same MJ 12

member out at the same time. Once in play, you can use an MJ 12 ability during either player's battle phase. The MJ 12 are all rare, with one at super rare, so expect them to be hot tickets once this 123-card expansion hits shelves. Also look for hobby leagues to debut along with it, and more releases in May, August and November. ■ TM



ZATCH BELL

47 CLOUT FANTASY

The collectible chip-chucking sport took the gaming community by storm in 2005—you might say they "flipped out" over it—with its innovative new mechanics. Even with no other comparable game, look for *Clout Fantasy* to go "all in" in 2006. At least three new sets are in various stages of the pipeline and promise new mechanics, rules and settings for the races.

March's *Defender of Undersea* will add a new chip ability—which publisher Hidden City Games is being rather secretive about—all new artwork and a focus on life under the waves, which probably means at least one new race for players.

Clout releases through the rest of the year are not set in stone when it comes to title or release date. All we've got to go on are the tentative titles of *Redbeard's Revenge* and *Orlunburg Horror*, which we're betting will be summer and fall releases with new mechanics and races for each. And if you can't bet with these chips, we're playing the wrong game. ■ BF



CLOUT'S BORDER MARSHALL

48 CITY OF HEROES CCG

If your bleary and bloodshot eyes need a break from the glare of your computer screen and the endless violence of Paragon City, Alderac Entertainment has heard your cries: The first expansion for the *CoH* CCG, *Shadows of the Past*—yes, it has the same title as the first expansion for the online game—is due to soar onto store shelves in the May/June timeframe and make your dreams of building the perfect hero that much more obtainable.

According to designer Dave Williams, who's designed past hits such as *Doomtown* and *Legend of the Five Rings*, *SoP* is all about "filling in the gaps in power pools." The online game had 44 pools, and 24 of these were used in the first set. Another 12 are added in *Shadows*.

Additionally, there is a huge and renewed importance placed mechanic-wise on missions. Don't look for them to change or take whole new directions, but do be ready for all-new cards that allow players to affect, manipulate and search for them in different ways. If you're looking to brush up on your archtypes though, we've got you covered on who's who in the *CoH* universe.

MAJOR PLAYERS OF PARAGON CITY

Statesman

After unlocking the Far Eastern secret of unlocking the "inner will," Marcus Cole gained incredible strength, super speed, flight and invulnerability. Paragon City's first superhero has been fighting crime for more than 70 years.



Resitren

An industrial accident left Dr. Keyes (first name unknown) with the awesome power and responsibility that comes with generating and controlling anti-matter. He constructed a containment suit for himself so he could use his new abilities to combat evil.



Manticore

Billionaire Justin Sinclair took up the role of master archer Manticore from his father. Each of his specially constructed arrows costs a small fortune, an expense he weighs heavily when thinking about the rampant poverty in his hometown.



Lord Recluse

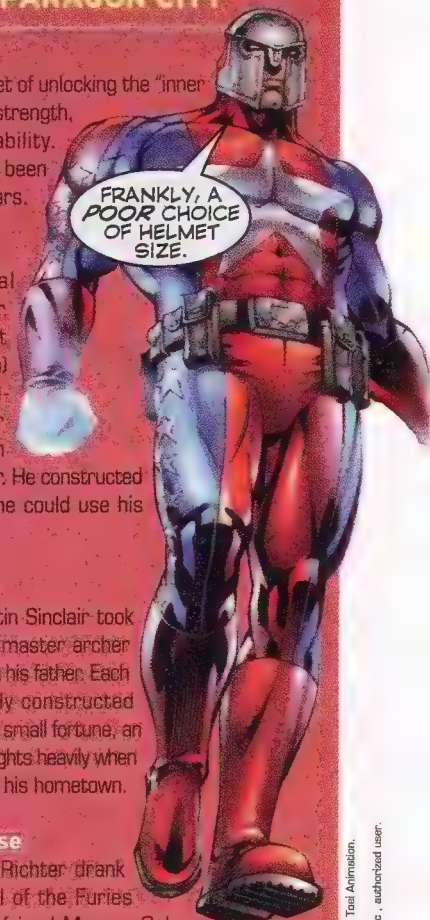
When Stefan Richter drank from the Well of the Furies with his best friend Marcus Cole, both men were granted vast superpowers. Cole went on to become Statesman, but Richter used his to gain total control over crime in Paragon City.



Ghost Widow

Killed while trying to assassinate a member of a rival crime organization, Belladonna Ventrano was freed from death by Lord Recluse. She now uses her supernatural life-draining abilities in his service.

■ BF



49 DRAGON BALL Z TCG

Transformation kicks off 2006 with a 121-card release on March 15. In it you'll see Goku go super saiyan for the first time in his new TCG, Frieza's final butt-kicking form, Piccolo fused with Nail and Dende, and the Namekian dragon balls. Captain Ginyu and his team of posers will also be the first to break the ally rule. Like anyone's surprised to find these guys cheating.

50 STARGATE SG-1 CCG

Available in August 2006 from Comic Images, the *Stargate SG-1* CCG blends elements of the TV series with mission-based gaming. It'll be a sure favorite of sci-fi and gaming fans alike.

51 ALL TOMORROW'S ZOMBIES

Due in the early spring timeframe, look for Eden Studios to roll out *All Tomorrow's Zombies*, a guide to creating a sci-fi setting for the undead of the *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* RPG. Besides such expected rules for netrunning, sci-fi equipment and biotech, look for new zombie aspects and streamlined psionics.

52 MAGE KNIGHT VIDEO GAME

Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier will release for the Nintendo DS in the spring and play very much like a virtual version of WizKids' miniatures game. The Solonavi threaten to devastate the Land and only you—Destiny's Soldier—can put together an army to end that threat.

53 VAMPIRE: THE REQUIEM

March's 160-page *Requiem Chronicler's Guide* (\$29.99) for *Vampire:*



The Requiem will feature more than 20 new and different ways to play the RPG, with optional rules and new mechanics, as well as a guide to creating enemies and example story templates.

54 A GAME OF THRONES RPG

Guardians of Order has several supplements for its new *A Game of Thrones* RPG on the 2006 docket: *The Book of Fire and Ice* (\$49.95) is due at the end of January, April's *Winter is Coming* (\$29.99), August's *A Clash of Kings* (\$39.99) and *Hedge Knights and Sworn Swords* (\$29.99) in November.

54 PROMETHEAN

People who haven't read Mary Shelley's classic tale probably can't tell you the name of Frankenstein's monster was "Adam," and he was created to be the first new man of his kind by the arrogant doctor.

Now imagine that you're one of these soulless creations, lonely and hated in a world of humans, fashioned by a creator with a god-complex or a fellow-Promethean "prototype" who was simply looking for companionship or to construct a being more pitiful than itself. In White Wolf's new role-playing game for the World of Darkness due late this summer, these lineages of creators and creations are uncommon—only four to six may exist—as the knowledge needed to complete these abominations is rare and forbidden. And there are dire risks.

Promethean creations such as yourself who attempt to produce another in their own likeness gamble with the very boundaries of life and death and may end up generating a "Pandoran," a monster of chaos that feeds on the fire within all Prometheans, a child that seeks to consume its parent. Still, the loneliness known by Prometheans alone drives you to many aspirations normal men would never consider.

**56 STREET WARRIORS**

After the success of the *Alpha* edition, *STREET WARRIOR*s will release its first expansion, *The Beginning*, set for the first quarter of 2006. This new set will introduce the Yakuza, Mob and Forgotten Veterans. The rules are also reworked to integrate the tournament rules. If you are into gangs, violence or an all-around good time, then check this out!

57 EXALTED II

The second edition of the wildly popular *Exalted* RPG from White Wolf will see light in February 2006. This new edition will smooth out all of the rough edges found in the first edition, like redundant abilities and slow combat play. Also, the new books will be full color throughout—something White Wolf hasn't done in almost 10 years—with an eight-page manga introduction, a two-page spread for each chapter and a four-page manga epilogue for the book.

58 CODENAME: KIDS NEXT DOOR TCG

The TCG that lets kids customize their cards with S.T.I.C.K.A.H.S. sheets in every booster pack is bringing some of the most diabolical villains ever into play with Operation: S.O.O.P.E.R.E.V.I.L. Releasing later this month, it'll pit the KND against the Lice Queen, Zombie Nerds and the Great White Asparagus in a battle to keep the world free from their tyrannical rule.

59 THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS CCG

Two new expansions are planned for 2006. In March, the *Christmastown* expansion hits, which will feature 120 new cards including locales from Christmastown and new characters. Players will also be able to pursue an "anti-Halloween" side strategy, which allows them to negate the value of their opponents' Halloweentown creations with Christmastown creations. Another new addition will be "what-if" scenarios where players will be able to "cross the line" between towns and abduct even more Christmastown residents. Then in August, the *Real World* expansion will be released. This will feature a total of 150 new cards, including new versions of all the characters in Halloweentown plus some really obscure ones that have not been released yet like Pumpkin Boy and the Rat. Players will be able to send Jack Skellington into the real world to deliver his spooky creations and earn bonus score points. Before all this spooky fun hits, a tournament kit will be released in January to all tournament directors; and it will feature 10 new cards that will be given out as prizes after tournaments.



60 CONSPIRACY X

Eden Studio's *Conspiracy X* RPG makes a comeback in 2006, with version 2.0 due to hit shelves sometime this year. Also in the works is a pair of supplements based on extraterrestrial encounters and paranormal activities.

61 BLACKMOOR

In March, Dave Arneson and Goodman Games will release the soft-cover version of the *Blackmoor* campaign setting for d20 fantasy. This is the original setting for *D&D*, the setting where the game all started 30 years ago. \$34.99 gets you 240 pages and a foldout map.

62 MAGE: THE AWAKENING

Guardians of the Veil for White Wolf's *Mage: The Awakening* is due in March. The 224-page hardcover will contain everything gamers need to know about the history and culture of old Atlantis, with new spells and items, plus story hooks and more.

63 GUNDAM WAR CCG

Char's Counter Attack, a 200-card expansion based on the movie of the same name, will introduce Amaro and Char piloting their Nu and Sazabi gundams. Both can be brought into play in reroll status that allows them to attack or defend immediately, and they'll be two of the baddest mechs yet printed. Zeon faction fans will also see the Black Trinary and Kampfer suits, while some of the anime's most famous scenes are captured on the cards.

64 ONE PIECE CCG

The Passage to the Grand Line expansion is due out in February, and it'll bring Ms. April Fool's Day, Dr. Kureha and a bunch more of Luffy and com-

pany to the game while they challenge the Baroque Works pirates in the Grand Line. Look for lots of new technique cards that deal direct damage, manipulate your opponent's hand and end battles that aren't going your way.

65 EVE ONLINE CCG

Eve Online, the hard sci-fi, commerce-focused MMORPG by Icelandic company CCP, will be launching its first-ever cardboard incarnation later this year. Release details are scarce, but the game will focus on building up credits by mining locations and blowing the heck out of your opponent's fleet and base.

66 TÉKUMEL & BESM

Two long-awaited RPGs—long, long awaited—arrive in 2006 from the gurus at Guardians of Order. Arriving in February is *Tékumel: d20 System RPG* (\$39.95); the first licensed game world in the history of *D&D* has been retooled and updated to work with d20 rules. And the animesque RPG *Big Eyes Small Mouth (BESM) Third Edition* finally debuts in March in a limited edition at a price of \$74.95.

67 WARMACHINE

Southern Island has acquired the license to produce action figures of characters from Privateer Press' fantasy mech *Warmachine* miniatures universe. The first Lord Commander Coleman Stryker will be available for about \$19.99 in the first quarter of 2006 with five more figures and a warjack scheduled for summer.

68 ASTROSTYLE

The Astro Twins, twin astrologers featured in *Teen People* and AOL's Teen Channel, and Upper Deck have created *AstroStyle*, an entire line of fortune-

telling gaming gear for the pre-teen girl and the occasional curious young adult male. Featuring a board game based on the zodiac, a "Tic-Tac-Tarot" game, Diary/Scrapbook game, fortune-telling makeup and fortune-telling candy.

69 RACER KNIGHTS: RENEGADES

The new set for the *Racer Knights of Falconus* CCG expands the game with 85 new plastic racer components and 22 new knight cards, all of which are compatible with the original *Racer Knights* set. *Renegades*

GUNDAM WAR





also introduces many new special abilities, weapon types and special modifications.

70 WARLORDS OF THE ACCORDLANDS RPG

Based on the original *Warlord* CCG from AEG, this RPG, though still in production, offers everything from the CCG tenfold. Four full-color hardcovers are slated for release in '06: *The Master Codex*, *The World Atlas*, *Monsters & Lairs* and the *Campaign Adventure Book*.

71 WINX CLUB

A CCG by Upper Deck based on the popular animated series. Play as the Winx Club fairies and all their friends as you fight against the evil Witches. Look for even more with three new two-player tin sets, both glitter and scented cards and 36 bonus makeup cards. Revlon be damned!

72 XIAOLIN WARRIORS TCG

The Xiaolin New Year starts on February 22 with the game's first expansion: *Wudai Warriors*. For starters, this 99-card set will introduce several new Shen Gong Wu before they appear on the TV show. Second, teamwork will be introduced as a new mechanic that gives your monks bonuses when they work together in formations. Follow-up expansions are slated for summer and fall.

73 NEOPETS TCG

March 3 will be the day to reflect on all the "somethings" that have happened in past expansions, as the 200-card *Travels in Neopia* brings back fan favorite cards from *Mystery Island*, *Return of Dr. Sloth*, *Lost Desert* and more. And of course, there'll be new virtual prize codes included in every pack. The game's next original expansion is slated for June: *Haunted Woods*.

74 ANACHRONISM

Got a hankering for Moctezuma's revenge, or just like saying the name Auitzotl? You're in luck then, cuz they're leading the way for the Aztec culture in *Anachronism's* Set 5. It's the first of several expansions due for TriKing Games' smash-hit CCG in 2006, and it's got hordes of new warriors to add to the huge mix already available. In addition to the Aztecs, the set also features Spanish leaders Hernán Cortes and Queen Isabella, and Saracen (Arab) warriors Harun as-Rashid and Salah ad-Din. Making the game's first reappearance are the Japanese, led by

heroes Takeda Shingen and Hijikata Toshizo. In addition to the expansion's 20 new warriors, Set 5 also features the game's first gunpowder-based weapon, more ways to influence future games in a match and new ways to protect warriors from high-damage combos. Sets 6, 7 and 8 are scheduled to follow Set 5 later in the year.

75 NAVIA DRATP

Slow does not equal stop with Navia Dratp. The once-per-year release schedule will continue in September of 2006 with series three. In the meantime, March will see a national "new guy night" campaign and the price for *Unleashed Darkness* will be slashed from \$9 to \$5 (\$30 to \$15 for starters) to help bring those newbs up to speed.

76 CYBERPUNK RPG

Lock 'n' load, all you roleplayers! *Cyberpunk v.3* should be out before the snow melts. At \$32, and around 200-plus pages, it contains everything you need to navigate the world of the megacorporations, cyborgs, edgerunners and mechajocks. A slimmed-down version will be available for download at DriveThruRPG.com.

77 ROCKETMEN RPG

Pinnacle Entertainment, famous for its *Deadlands* and *Weird War* role-playing games, has just inked a deal with WizKids to do RPGs based on properties such as the *Pirates* and *Rocketmen* constructible strategy games as well as *Mage Knight*. These could hit late in 2006.

78 RIFTS

Palladium Books of *Rifts* fame begin celebrating its 25th anniversary in January. Every month throughout 2006, the company will be offering new, different and top-secret game gear, from a special *Best of the Rifter* book to exclusive clothing and more. Palladiumbooks.com has more.

79 PULP CTHULHU

The Ancient Ones arrive in '06—actually, make that 1936. The long-awaited *Pulp Cthulhu* RPG from Chaosium is due before the end of the first quarter of the year and will be a standalone game. Also due in that timeframe is *Malleus Monstrorum: Lore of Things from Beyond*, a monster sourcebook.

80 EPIC BATTLES

Not only is Score moving ahead with its own *Street Fighter* inclusive CCG—making it the first game to star in two CCGs simultaneously since *Dungeons & Dragons* did so with *Spellfire* and *Blood Wars*—it's moving the other half of the game, *Mortal Kombat*, into hobby stores starting with the February expansion. Once there, expect to see tournament kits with exclusive promos and all the organized play support associated with other Score games. And *Mortal Kombat* will have two more releases over the course of the year.

But that's not all for *Epic Battles*; the *Street Fighter* side will continue in mass-market stores, such as Blockbuster, with three releases of its own in 2006 starting in the spring. And look for a new property to be added to the game at the hobby-store level around the same time, with the possibility of more releases later in the year.



TALKIN' 'BOUT MY NEXT GEN-ERATION

THE 10 COOLEST THINGS ABOUT THE XBOX 360 By Matt Cabral

The media blitz surrounding the Xbox 360 launch went far beyond the typical marketing madness that accompanies a new console launch. From Mountain Dew to the Mojave Desert, Microsoft blazed a promotional path bigger than your usual Hollywood blockbuster.

1. XBOX 'LIVE'

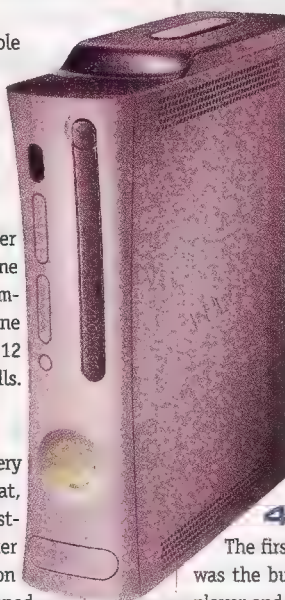
Xbox Live was already the most comprehensive online console gaming experience around, allowing non-techies to enter the broadband brotherhood previously dominated by PC players. The 360 kicks up the user-friendly interface a few notches, opening the online community to casual gamers. From voice chat to player stats, the 360 offers an effortless gateway to Live's new and old features.

The frosting on this cyber-cake is the Xbox Live Gamer Card, which tracks all your gaming accomplishments and online behavior to create a profile that can be viewed by future teammates or opponents. This fun feature even tallies your offline conquests, so if you've beaten *Halo 2* on "Legendary" mode 12 times, the online community is made aware of your mad skills.

2. VISUALS

You won't have to scoop your eyes off the floor after playing every single Xbox 360 title. Don't get us wrong, they all look great, but there's a difference between "great" and "I-think-I-just-wet-myself amazing." The launch titles that warrant the latter response certainly make up for the others. Spend some time on the front line in *Call of Duty 2* or creep through the cramped

InQuest Gamer slices and dices its way through the hoopla in favor of some hardcore hands-on time to deliver the goods on Microsoft's buzz-worthy box. After an intense weekend of fragging and fighting, these are our picks for the 10 best reasons to own a 360.



hallways in *Condemned: Criminal Origins* and you'll get the picture. Oh, and did we mention the white-knuckle cockpit view in *Project Gotham Racing 3*? Damn, I need to change my shorts again.

3. DASHBOARD

The 360 puts its über-friendly dashboard front-and-center, giving it an accessible, home PC feel. The super-simple interface is broken into four Windowsesque boxes that allow easy access to media, games, system settings and Xbox Live. With a few simple pushes and presses on the controller, you can jump from customizing your in-game soundtracks to accessing cool Xbox Live Marketplace content.

A condensed version of these tools and info can even be accessed during gameplay by pressing that shiny Xbox button on the controller. Newbie 360 owners anxious to pop in that first game may find themselves stopping to smell the many roses sprouting in 360's front end before they actually get their frag on.

4. DESIGN

The first Xbox was a black behemoth emblazoned with a giant green "X." It was the bully of many an entertainment center, intimidating your slim DVD player and leaving many an iPod cowering before its powerful presence.

AND THE AWARD GOES TO... IQ GAMER RATES THE 360's LAUNCH LINEUP

BREAKOUT CHARACTER

Not since Lara Croft have we seen a video game star that's as sexy as she is stealthy. *Assassin's Creed* has been revamped for the next generation of gaming, offering gamers a now locked and loaded lady.

COOLEST EFFECT

You'll instinctively cover your mouth and start bucking as you try to navigate through the thick fog of *Call of Duty 2*'s realistic smoke grenades.



CALL OF DUTY 2

SICKEST STORY

Tracking a serial killer in *Condemned: Criminal Origins* offers a cinematic creep-fest that'll have you sleeping with a night-light and calling for mercy.

EYE CANDY TO SPARE

You'll probably be too busy getting your ass shot off to notice *Call of Duty 2*'s sweet graphics. This visual masterpiece finally offers gamers a fresh reason to check out WWII shooters again.

EDGE OF YOUR SEAT GAME PLAY

You'll be tempted to reach if your seat belt is securely fastened as you experience *Project Gotham Racing 3* from its thrilling cockpit view. Hang on!

SICKEST SOUND

Flash and bang make some square-bulleted sounds when paired with the variety of makeshift weaponry offered in *Condemned: Criminal Origins*. Who needs guns when you've got rusted rebar and a splintered 2x4?

TOTAL IMMERSION

Darker, moodier and gorgeous graphics are supported by cinematic gameplay in *Call of Duty 2*. Two intense pacing and hit-to-fat action make "Spring Private Ryan" look like a kiddie flick.

MUST BUY

Perfect Dark Zero is a slick shooter offering a next-gen trifecta of graphics, aimed and gameplay that really shines on the Xbox 360. Its lengthy solo campaign, co-op play and online options make it the Perfect title to savor in the next generation of gaming.



PERFECT DARK ZERO

This never bothered us. We could care less what the consoles looked like as long as they played kick-ass games. That was until we got our 360. This sexy gaming beast has a sleek design that would look right at home on Apple's assembly line. The irony that its guts could kick the gigabytes out of many gaming PCs makes the geek chic facade all the more attractive.

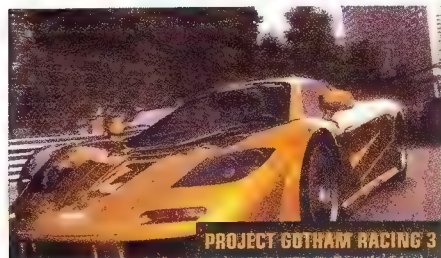
5. WIRELESS CONTROLLER

It might not seem like a big deal, but playing the Xbox 360 with a wireless controller just adds another level of realism to an already immersive experience. Pulling the trigger on your six-shooter in *Gun* or lobbing a frag grenade in *Call of Duty 2* feels all the more authentic when you're not tethered to a console.

You'll know exactly what we're saying that first time you instinctively tug on the controller to get some extra slack in the wire, only to discover your newfound freedom. The controller also offers an awesome button layout that forgoes the previous model's black and white buttons in favor of two additional shoulder triggers.

6. LAUNCH GAMES

Despite the absence of a system-selling title like *Halo*, the 360 offers a solid launch lineup with enough diversity and eye-candy to satisfy the most jaded joystick jockey. *Perfect Dark Zero*, *Call of Duty 2* and *Quake 4* blasted through the launch window and have kept our trigger fingers frantically firing. *Need for Speed Most Wanted*, *Ridge Racer 6* and *Project Gotham Racing 3* provide the rubber-burning thrills. And *King Kong*, *Kameo: Elements of Power*, *Condemned: Criminal Origins* and a host of sports titles round out the genre-spanning pack. There's no *Halo* or *Mario 64*-caliber entry, but what the 360 lacks



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3



KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

in AAA titles it more than makes up for with quantity and quality.

7. AUDIO

Depending on what game you choose to pop into the 360 first, you'll probably experience one of two "next-gen" moments. For most it'll be the visuals, as a smoke grenade clouds your entire HD display during an early moment in *Call of Duty 2*. But those who look past the impressive effects will equally appreciate the crisp sound that permeates the ear canals. From whizzing bullets to cracking skulls, 360's sharp and realistic sounds will often have you looking over your shoulder or ducking for cover. And that's without a full 5.1 set up.

8. HALO 3

No, it's not out yet. And we can't tell you when it will be. But we can guarantee that Master Chief's next Covenant con-

quest will take place exclusively on the Xbox 360. You could wait till its release to pick up Microsoft's new box, but do you really want to be in the unenviable position of getting comfortable with a new game machine the same day *Halo 3* lands? While you're hooking up the new console, setting your system preferences and taking in all the awesomeness the 360 has to offer, next-gen veterans will be building their Spartan reputation on Xbox Live.

9. MULTIMEDIA

The much hyped media functions of the 360 go far beyond a tacked-on afterthought. With a hard drive and smooth interface, gamers and the media-loving masses may find themselves abandoning their PCs in favor of this "game" console. Digital music, photo and video storage is effortless and easy to enjoy from this entertainment hub. Players can seamlessly transition from viewing family vacation photos to diving into a *Perfect Dark Zero* deathmatch without their asses ever leaving the couch.

10. FIRST KID ON THE BLOCK

Sure, we can't wait to play *Metal Gear Solid 4* on the PS3 or Nintendo's next-gen Mario. But guess what? They're not out yet! If you want to experience next-gen gaming now, then you'll have to suck it up and donate to Bill Gates' bulging bank account. Next-gen is here and Microsoft is the only game in town. Besides, you could do a lot worse than gorgeous graphics, superb sound and great gaming. Don't be a loser. Pick one up!

Associate Editor Matt Cabral is already in line for the PS3. Look for him outside of Best Buy in Nyack, NY. He'll be the guy in the "My Little Pony" sleeping bag surrounded by empty Red Bull cans.

WALK THE LINE

ONE MAN'S JOURNEY TO SCORE AN XBOX 360 ON LAUNCH DAY



6 P.M. Fourteen hours before Best Buy opens its doors to hungry 360 buyers, I arrive at the mall to find several squatters already staking their spot in line for a chance to be the first next-gen gamers.

6:30 P.M. After a frantic walk to my wife that initially had her believing something more urgent than a console launch was happening, she arrives to find my spot in line while I head home for some launch-night necessities.

7 P.M. I return with sleeping bag, pillow, stadium chair, PSP and of course, Red Bull.

9:45 P.M. Eleven hours before Best Buy cracks the seal on a pallet of "Microsoft" sleeping boxes, visible through the store's front entrance, the next-gen natives get restless. The first of many Texas Hold 'Em tournaments erupts and a rowdy Nerf football game attracts the attention of mall security.

12 MIDNIGHT Mentally exhausted, but hopped up on energy drinks and pre-release hype, I begin to wonder why I didn't preorder this damn thing.

4 A.M. With a dead PSP battery and \$40 less in my pocket (damn those Hold 'Em hoagies!), I make an effort to fight my kid-on-Christmas-morning anticipation and catch some Zs.

6:15 A.M. What the hell? Am I dreaming or are these actually hot girls passing out free Red Bull? "I'll take two, please."

7 A.M. The "Sold" banner and free, caffeine-laced beverage kiosk is soon overshadowed by news of a woman who buys a spot in line for \$600. A sleazy line squatter heads home happier and richer. He'll be sorry later when he's not playing *Perfect Dark Zero* with the rest of us.

8 A.M. Boredom sets in. People go nuts. I get my precious console and head home for some much-needed sleep.

9 A.M. Yeah, right! Who am I kidding? How can I sleep with this novel piece of gaming tech sitting in my living room? I'll sleep when I'm dead. But right now, Jessica Dark is waiting for me. ■ MC

MIDDLE-EARTH EXPANDS

THE BOOKS JOIN THE FILM IN EA'S LATEST RTS OUTING

When games get sequels, you often hear about better graphics, larger worlds, more playable sides and the like. Rarely do you hear that the game's license has changed, dramatically changing the content of the game. But that's what's happened with *The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-earth 2*. Electronic Arts had been making games based on the recent trilogy of films. Now, EA has unified the film license and the book license, meaning their new game can use elements of both the films and the books. So you'll get those better graphics and bigger worlds, but you'll also get to war across Middle-earth the way you were meant to, and not be restricted to the keystone battles of the film.

The three original sides from the first game return, but drawing on materials from the books, three new sides appear. Both the elves and the dwarves join the battle against Sauron's forces—the dwarves even get a sweet battle wagon that hurls flaming barrels from the back of a cart. Evil gains the goblins, a side made up of many of the nasty and evil beasts that never made it into the films. There is also a single-player campaign that covers the War in the North, taking players to places such as Dol Guldur that the previous game couldn't visit.

If you're interested in more than reliving the big battles that never made it into the films, there are some serious tweaks that transform the RTS. Most importantly, in the first game you could only place buildings in specific loca-

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE BATTLE FOR MIDDLE-EARTH 2

GENRE RTS

PLATFORM PC

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts

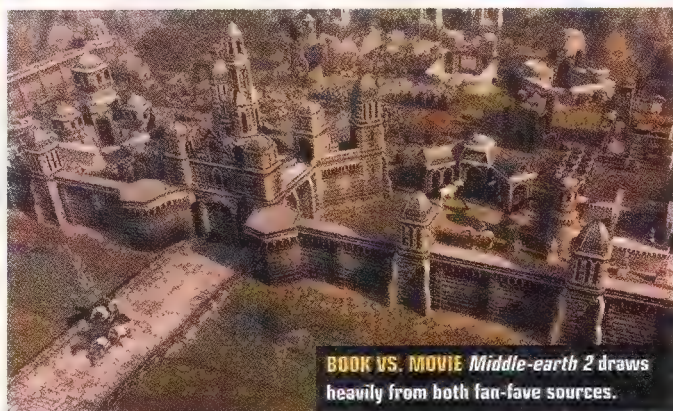
RELEASE DATE Spring 2006

YOU'LL LOVE IT IF You can't believe anyone saw the movies without reading the books.

tions. In the sequel, you can place buildings anywhere. You can also upgrade them, improving their function or defense.

The game preserves the visual style of the film, as well as the persistent heroes, in case you wanted to have Legolas or Aragorn on your side. Of course, if you'd like to get involved in the workings of Middle-earth more personally, you can create your own hero, customizing his appearance, weapons and skills.

Finally, there is an entire War of the Ring metagame. You are presented with a map of Middle-earth and play a *Risk*-style game over its fate. You can then resolve battles over individual spaces using the RTS engine, complete with landmark sites familiar from both the films and the books. Soon you shall rule Middle-earth, and your realm will include all the obscure places from the books, with none of the horrible Elven poetry. ■ **Kyle Ackerman**



GIANT ROBOT GOODNESS

BATTLE WITH CUSTOMIZED GUNDAMS IN 'MS SAGA'

Giant fighting robots and children determined to avenge the loss of their orphanage... using giant fighting robots. This must be a console RPG. But it's not just any RPG—*MS Saga* brings mobile suits from "Mobile Suit Gundam," "G Gundam" and "Gundam Wing" to your PS2.

MS Saga is set in an alternate future in which gigantic battle armor, known as "mobile suits," was once commonly used, but

MS SAGA: A NEW DAWN

GENRE RPG

PLATFORM Playstation 2

PUBLISHER Bandai

RELEASE DATE February 2006

YOU'LL LOVE IT IF Your giant battle machines just aren't cute enough yet.



has now faded into legend and myth. Suddenly, mysterious war machines appear around the planet and begin destroying everything. Tristan and Fritz are both orphans whose orphanage is attacked by these unknown aggressors. Promising retribution, they set out to arm themselves and take their revenge.

There's an extensive story to enjoy, but the real substance of the game is turn-based combat. The decisions you make while configuring your mobile suit, followed by the important tactical choices that you make within any given battle, pull you into countless hours of play.

The customization options are enormous. Combining aspects of both RPG character development and inventory management with the fun of perfecting your massive armored vehicle, even preparing for combat is obsessively engaging. Over the course of the story, players will get to use nearly 40 different mobile suits, taking advantage of hundreds of interchangeable parts to design the perfect war machines. More importantly, you can create the engines of destruction that fit your taste and preference rather than being forced into a particular play style.

You may have already played pencil and paper Gundam roleplaying, or even the collectible card game, but here's your chance to run through a living, breathing electronic Gundam adventure. And if you're worried about the art being "cutesy," keep in mind that the characters have been designed by Akira Yasuda, the same guy who designed the *Street Fighter* characters. It may seem cute, but it's full of war machines that are pure fun to play. ■ **KA**

SHINY GUNS RULE!

HUNTED BECOMES HUNTER IN 'PREY'

Tommy isn't a scientist caught in a high-energy physics experiment, a space marine on the wrong planet at the wrong time or even a SWAT officer just doing his job. No, you play as Tommy, a Native American living on the reservation with his girlfriend after working as an Army mechanic. But, just like all those other unwitting heroes, Tommy is sucked into space by a massive vessel—a combination of organic and inorganic parts that seems to scour the galaxy for life forms. After a spectacular abduction, you take control of Tommy, his trusty wrench and an out-of-control life.

Prey is being built using a modified version of the *Doom 3* engine, meaning that it's incredibly detailed, but includes plenty of both color and light to show off all the bizarre alien species and alien technologies that Tommy encounters. The visuals are clearly the highlight of the fast-paced FPS action, as you deal with not only an arsenal of conventional weapons, but some mysterious alien weapons as well. For example, grenades are useful, but Tommy finds tiny creatures that serve exactly the same function, and can even be fired from an alien launching device.

After the visuals, the coolest aspect of *Prey* promises to be the way the game uses gravity. Tommy has to deal with low and even zero gravity environments, as well as areas where gravity can change with the flick of a switch. Aside from making it difficult to toss a grenade, imagine the potential puzzles that come from the manipulation of gravity. Furthermore, there are paths with local gravity that might differ from that of surrounding space.

PREY

GENRE FPS

PLATFORM PC, Xbox 360

PUBLISHER 2K Games

RELEASE DATE Spring 2006

YOU'LL LOVE IT IF Your abduction nightmares include gooey organic guns.

And the messed-up gravity is accentuated by the game's many portals, wild-looking teleporters that may or may not be one-way tickets to doom.

Of course, it's not all futuristic alien technology. Tommy discovers his spiritual side throughout *Prey* with the help of his grandfather's ghost. Those talents include the ability to pass through solid objects in spirit form. This also equips Tommy to deal with the ethereal enemies that are all the more wicked for their ability to possess other living beings. So it might not be a bad-tempered alien with a gun that's the big threat. Instead, it might be a possessed human girl. You won't know for certain until *Prey* is released.



PREY YOU DON'T FALL 2K games ups the FPS ante by including wicked gravity effects.

CODED TRANSMISSIONS

100 GOOD MEN DIED TO BRING YOU THIS INFORMATION

MATCH MADE IN GAMING HEAVEN

Media investment firm Elevation Partners finally has something to crow about, besides counting rock star Don among its members. It recently facilitated a merger that could result in some of the most anticipated video games ever. Forging a partnership between Pandemic Studios (*Eurocomics*, *Star Wars: Battlefront*, *Tell Tale's* *Survivor*) and BioWare (*Knights of the Old Republic*, *Neverwinter Nights*, *Jade Empire*) certainly overshadows their previous failed acquisition of Eidos. No word yet on what games this mega-merger will produce, but you can bet your Xbox 360 that it'll be delivering the next-gen goods.

WANT SOME HOLY WATER WITH YOUR MILK DUDES?

Crystal Sky Pictures recently acquired the rights to Konami's popular Bravely-branded series, *Castlevania*. The film, directed by Paul W.S. Anderson (*Mortal Kombat*, *Resident Evil*) will start production in mid-2006. Crystal Sky also has a *Tell Tale's* and *Pac-Man* flick in development.

NO 'HOT COFFEE' FOR MARIO

Nintendo has announced that its "Revolution" console will use parental controls. The feature will allow parents to set the console to only play certain games based on the established ESRB ratings. Now Nintendo just needs to convince the kids that Mario is cooler than Master Chief.

YOU SHOULD HAVE PREORDERED

The Xbox 360 launch was met with long lines and a limited supply that sent many disappointed gamers home empty handed. eBay was flooded with listings, fetching as much as \$1000 for the "Premium" package and

\$1300 for the stripped-down "Core" package. Greedy gamers willing to sell their prized place in retail lines earned similar profits. You may want to get in line now if you hope to score a PS3 as launch day.

NOW THAT'S A 'HAPPY' MEAL

McDonald's customers will want to skip the drive-thru and head inside the fast food chain to enjoy some Nintendo DS Wi-Fi gaming with their value meals. Nintendo and the Golden Arches have partnered to offer free Wi-Fi at many locations. Gamers can now enjoy fallowing food while playing games. Oh, never mind, they were already doing that.

■ Matt Cohn



RONALD McDONALD

RINGING IN THE NEW

MISSED OUT ON THAT HOLIDAY GIFT YOU REALLY WANTED? 'INQUEST' HOOKS YOU UP WITH 28 REVIEWS OF THE HOTTEST VIDEO GAMES THAT SHOULD BE ON YOUR MUST BUY LIST.

CITY OF VILLAINS

NCsoft | Supervillainous MMORPG | PC

★★★★

Excellent! Finally, there's a breath of fresh evil in the world. That evil is *City of Villains*. *City of Heroes* showed the world that MMOGs don't have to be hideously complex. Not just that, but it demonstrated massively multiplayer games can grab newbies, allowing gamers to play out their superhero fantasies. But there was no way to play a bad guy. Spidey and Batman fans had their day, but what if you idolize Dr. Doom or Lex Luthor? Now you can be the villain of your dreams.

Unless you get involved with a bank heist or assaulting a base of super-powered do-gooders, your missions aren't too much more sinister than a typical *CoH* mission. But the character archetypes are different, and in many ways more interesting, letting you play a ninja or nasty necromancer. There's nothing like an army of zombies to really get the bile flowing. The costumes, as well, are on the darker side, complete with bondage gear and animal parts.



It is easier to solo in *CoV* than it was in *CoH*, making it possible to have fun on your own, but it's better as part of a group. Also, the new zones have plenty of character, giving you the feel of an evil archipelago filled with warring residents, and are far less sterile than *CoH* seemed at launch.

What really changes is the high-level game—especially player-vs.-player contests. *CoV* can be purchased separately from *CoH*, or can expand the content for your heroes. Either way, you need *CoV* to build bases, enter the new PvP zones, and enjoy the ability to join a large group facing off against a slew of heroes or stealing objects of

power from your well-intentioned rivals. Those organized assaults or haphazard skirmishes take the combined *CoH/CoV* to an entirely new level.

If you've ever wanted to take down one of those tights-wearing, cape-fluttering geeks by feeding him a healthy helping of evil, *CoV* is the perfect opportunity. Settle into your lab at the summit of a nearby volcano, boot up your PC and see how quickly you can rise in infamy. ■ Kyle Ackerman

CALL OF DUTY 2

Activision | WWII FPS | PC

★★★★★

Where do you take the sequel to the strongest single-player WWII first-person shooter yet released? Why, back to the trenches, with more missions and even more polish. *Call of Duty 2* throws you back into the boots of Russian, British and American soldiers fighting in the European theater of WWII. As you complete one army's missions, you unlock the others until you've fought in Russia, North Africa and even the D-Day assault.

The graphics are even better than the original *Call of Duty*, although this game will cause even the meatiest of machines to slow down on anything but the lowest graphics settings. And true to the original, you are always one among many soldiers. In just about every scenario, you are surrounded by fellow soldiers, carefully programmed to support and aid you, while still subtly throwing all the truly heroic moments your way.

Despite the familiarity, there are a few changes. The most jarring difference is that *Call of Duty 2* gets rid of the health meter and replaces it with *Halo*-style recovery. Get wounded and you'll see indications on the screen, but hide for a moment and you'll recover fully. At first it seems bizarre to be a supersoldier with Wolverine-esque powers of recovery. But after a short time, it makes far more sense than hunting for health packs on the battlefield. The game also introduces smoke grenades (with fantastic looking smoke!), that help you and the other infantry advance without getting



mowed down by fixed gun emplacements.

Getting through all three campaigns is a project for one solid day of play or a casual weekend. But there is also multiplayer, which has attracted a large and dedicated base of players, as passionate for this game as they were for its predecessor. That gets you as much Nazi-bashing action as you could possibly need. (Also available on Xbox 360.) ■ KA

RATING SYSTEM

My God! It's full of stars! But what do those stars in the ratings mean?

★ DON'T TOUCH IT! IT'S EVIL! ★★ POOR ★★★ GOOD ★★★★★ GREAT ★★★★★★ AMAZING! A MUST PLAY

DRAGON QUEST VIII: JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING

Square Enix | RPG | PS2

★★★★

Did you ever want to play the part of a young man with a pet hamster trying to help a cursed king that looks like Yoda and a cursed princess who looks like Mr.—well, Ms. Ed? No? Well, by playing *Dragon Quest VIII* you'll realize what was missing from your life.

Dragon Quest VIII brings the long-running series to both the PlayStation 2 and to U.S. gamers in full 3D, modernizing the franchise that has long been a staple of Japanese console RPGs. It follows a young man and his friend on a quest to remove the curse from a king (and his horse daughter). They meet more friends on the way, and even partake in a little "hamster cam," running the hamster into places that humans can't go.

The visuals are both engaging as well as cartoonish and cute, making the game feel whimsical until the cute widdle foxes with rapiers skewer your gizzard. The monsters are hysterical. The smiling slimes, the big-eye-in-a-boot and frogs with demonic faces grafted to their backs all make the turn-based fights entertaining events.

Just as the visuals, sound and story are lovely, the gameplay can be frustrating at times. The problem lies mainly in the lethality of encounters and the long travel times from resurrection locations. In *Dragon Quest VIII*, neither save points nor raise-buddy-from-the-dead items exist. You save and resurrect in churches, and only at very high levels do you gain resurrection spells. In fact, the first one you get only has a 50 percent chance of working.

So, fun as the game is, you start by saving at the church. Then you run across the countryside to your destination—getting into fights while using your healing items and spells along the way—and fight through several lev-



els of dungeon only to risk meeting the boss with no items, no MP and no way of saving. If the whole party dies, you lose half your gold and reappear at the church, making it difficult to acquire better equipment and more healing items.

The game has an entertaining sense of humor, but does require a tolerance of console-RPG conventions to get true enjoyment out of the many hours of play *Dragon Quest VIII* offers. ■ Mur Lafferty

SOUL CALIBUR III

Namco | Fighting | PS2

★★★★

S*oul Calibur II* didn't leave much room for improvement, offering the best weapon-based fighting available on consoles. Rather than overhauling the polished fighting system, with *Soul Calibur III*, Namco added new moves, new characters, interactive cut-scenes, character customization options and branching paths in a story mode. There's even a new "Chronicles of the Sword" mode that nicely ties RPG-style character development and play flavored with elements of real-time strategy to the core game. Clearly, adding new play modes and options is far better than messing with the time-tested *Soul Calibur* fighting. It's elegant control scheme only uses half the Dual Shock controller's buttons, but anything else would clutter a finely honed interface.

The new character customization options are great, but don't permit total control over your character. You have complete discretion over the color palette of your costume, but you don't design a custom martial arts style or unique body. Instead, you choose one of six jobs that dictates your character's fighting style and choice of weapons. Brilliantly, each of



these jobs is different from the game's core characters. So, you're not just making a differently costumed Cervantes—you're creating something new that makes the "Chronicles of the Sword" fun.

The more conventional single-player mode is the "Tales of Souls" mode, in which you progress through a series of battles. But if you want to go the custom route, you need to stick to "Chronicles of the Sword," Vs. or the custom tournament mode. In "CotS," once you've created that first-level character, you play through a series of simplified RTS battles in which you command a skirmishing force that includes your character against computer-controlled forces including stars from the "Tales of Souls." While you attack and defend with these groups, it always comes down to endurance-style decisive battles. Meaning, if you have two characters in a fight while the computer has four, your two warriors grind it out against the other four without resting between rounds. The jockeying for position may be too slow for twitch-minded fans, but it puts the core fighting into a larger context and adds a single-player mode that takes longer than beating a 90-minute playthrough of one character's story.

All in all, *Soul Calibur III* is more like *Soul Calibur 2.5* and is sadly missing online play, but the many upgrades still make it a top-tier fighting game.

■ Thorin McGee

AEON FLUX

Majesco | Action/Platformer | Xbox

★★★

On its own, *Aeon Flux* is hardly a great game, but it fares much better than most movie-to-game adaptations. Unlike typical games based on films, *Aeon Flux* does a great job of capturing the look and feel of the movie's character and environments. Aeon is known for



her acrobatic prowess and the game offers that in spades. In fact, gamers will have more fun platforming than fighting, shooting or puzzle solving. The slick acrobatics are fun to pull off, especially when they're incorporated into combat. Snatching a henchman off a ledge is just as satisfying as any finishing move executed by the Persian Prince. A cool grappling hook device that has Aeon covering long distances at a zippy speed just enhances the acrobatic fun.

Beyond the platforming pleasures, *Aeon Flux* offers some average combat and frustrating puzzles that often have you steering an unwieldy capsule. The futuristic visuals help set the mood, but the disjointed story often steals from the immersive experience. If you're a fan of the fiction or *Prince of Persia*-style platforming, you'll definitely want to give this one a spin. Otherwise, you'll want to leave this acrobatic avatar dangling from the retail shelf. (Also available on PS2.) ■ Matt Cabral

CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

Konami | Action/Adventure | Xbox

★★★★

The 3D *Castlevania* outings just can't top the franchise's awesome 2D efforts, especially in light of the beautiful, recently released *Dawn of Sorrow*. That being said, *Curse of Darkness* delivers the ghoulish goods, providing the best 3D *Castlevania* to date.



Playing as Hector, gamers are introduced to a whole new tale in the Drac-slaying series. To start, Hector doesn't wield a whip. Instead, he has a variety of melee and projectile weapons at his disposal. Most interestingly, he'll use devil-forging skills to create "innocent devils"—beast-like pets that aid you on your quest. Some of these crafted creatures will help solve puzzles while others assist with combat and health rejuvenation. Experimenting with and upgrading these faithful beasts is a treat that breaks up the sometimes-monotonous action.

Beyond the devil-forging fun, players can expect the usual *Castlevania* fare: tons of respawning enemies, dark castle corridors and backtracking-laden exploration. While the levels are spread across Valachia, the layout is fairly standard. The package isn't perfect, but *Curse of Darkness* does offer a satisfying, gothic experience that should hold players over until *Castlevania*'s next side-scroller is released. (Also available on PS2.) ■ Matt Cabral

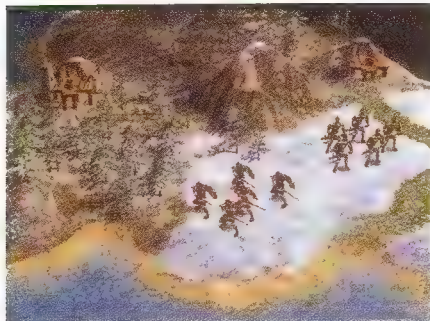
CIVILIZATION IV

2K Games | Turn-Based Strategy | PC

★★★★★



Civilization *IV* isn't just another computer game. It's the desert island game. With the release of *Civilization IV*, our second decade of conquering the world—or polluting it to death or even escaping in a rocket to Alpha Centauri—is even more obsessively replayable. There's very little in computer gaming that can match sitting down for a weekend to take your nomadic tribe on a journey of turn-based world domination or peaceful cultural outreach. *Civilization IV* does all that, while improving the basic formula and even offering faster play and improved multiplayer games.



Civilization IV's biggest change is the addition of religion. The game doesn't favor any religion in particular, but does make it possible for religions to clash, convert one another and even for nations to indulge in state religions. That transforms the impact of culture (introduced in *Civilization III*) and even impacts the kind of structures you build in your culture's city.

But changes in the flow of the game have just as much of an impact on your play. There are now multiple modes that let you play a speedy game or a painstakingly slow one. And the previously problematic multiplayer has been entirely cleaned up and works swimmingly. As if you needed excuses to replay *Civilization IV*, the unpredictability of human opponents means you could play this game forever. ■ KA

JAMES BOND 007: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Electronic Arts | Action | Xbox

★★★



You play Sean Connery as James Bond. By adapting a Bond film from the height of Bond's popularity and style, *From Russia With Love* fulfills the fantasies of legions of guys. *From Russia With Love* is dead-on with its retro-hip feel, and Bond is voiced by Connery himself.

The game itself further detour away from the first-person, taking on nearly every other camera. Most of the time you're playing in third-person mode, shooting it out with Russian agents. But expect some *Splinter Cell*-style espionage, jetpack flying and combat driving.

Sadly, the nostalgic euphoria wears off quickly because the game is both too easy and too short. There's not much challenge in the single-player missions. It's as if the developers figured that most buyers of this game were people who saw the movie when it originally came out and decided to dumb it down for the old folks who can't tell a gamepad from a martini glass. There's multiplayer action for up to four 007s, but it's basically a game of who finds the auto-target lock first. Consider us shaken, not stirred, about this Bond entry. (Also available for PS2 and GameCube.) ■ Karl Cramer

GUN

Activision | Western-Themed Action | Xbox

★★★★



Games featuring zombies and aliens are a dime a dozen, and new WWII shooters pop onto store shelves almost weekly. So it's refreshing to see that the western-themed gunslinger genre lassoed in *Gun*: a gritty, foul-mouthed take on the Old West that'll sat-

isfy fans of this underrepresented genre.

Gun has style and polish to spare as it depicts a time and place where gunslingers and whorehouses were as common as the suits and Starbucks that populate today's world. Its edgy presentation is more in line with HBO's "Deadwood" than the Lone Ranger's Old West. Intense violence, gripping cinematics and excellent, obscenity-spouting voice acting support this graphic and realistic environment.

Gun's play doesn't quite match its presentation, but it comes close by offering console cowboys tons of gunplay, rounded out by authentic weapons and grisly deaths. Picking off bad guys while on horseback is especially memorable.

Gun features an open-environment providing plenty of options in the way of side-missions, mini-games and a main story path. Gamers probably won't stray too far from the critical storyline, as it's far more interesting than the side missions that have you tracking bounties and playing poker. *Gun*'s only major flaw is that it's way too short; although the gunslinging action might have you moseying up for a second playthrough. (Also available on PS2, GameCube, PC and Xbox 360.) ■ Matt Cabral

THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO

Atari | Action | Xbox

★★★★

We wish this were the first effort at a Matrix videogame. Unfortunately, previous lackluster entries *Enter the Matrix* and *Matrix Online* have tarnished the license for gamers, giving this game a too-little, too-late feeling. Still, it's leagues better than *Enter the Matrix*, if for no other reason than you get to play as Neo instead of Will Smith's wife.



Path of Neo is a good action game that's teeming with Matrix touches, including tons of footage from the film trilogy. It nicely fleshes out film sequences into actual gameplay. Players should enjoy navigating the Chosen One through office cubicles and file cabinets, evading Agent Smith just like in the first movie. And there's no question that playing through the movie's trademark lobby gunfight scene is a blast. The thing is, much of what made "The Matrix" cool back in 1999 has since been done better in other games. Sure, you can make Neo wall-climb and slow down time, but gamers can enjoy cooler acrobatics with the *Prince of Persia* games and "bullet-time" effects have become a video game cliché on par with exploding barrels.

Fans that are still clamoring for anything Matrix will love this game as it offers solid play with all the Matrix trimmings. But if you're just looking for a great action game, you'll probably want to check out something else or just take the blue pill. (Also available on PS2 and PC.) ■ Matt Cabral

TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

Activision | Urban Action | Xbox

★★★★



TTrue Crime gets a bad rap because it's measured against the benchmark *Grand Theft Auto* games. On its own merits, *True Crime: Streets of L.A.* was a decent first outing, and this sequel greatly improves on its crime-fighting predecessor.

True Crime: NYC is not a direct sequel, but more of

a new chapter in the franchise. This time, players assume the role of a one-time gang-banger turned detective taking on crime, conspiracies and personal vendettas on New York's seedy streets. Everything from the story and characters to the gameplay and environments are an improvement over *Streets of L.A.* Players who could barely stomach Nick Kang, the lame-ass protagonist from the first game, will be relieved to don the urban street digs of Marcus Reed, a mostly believable badass.

Generally tight controls have gamers shooting, driving and fighting with satisfaction and relative ease. And the twist-at-every-turn narrative should keep players engaged till the very end. Seeing a virtual NYC come to life is also very cool, even if some famous landmarks are notably absent.

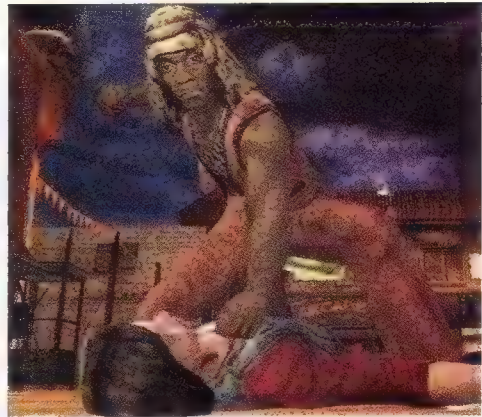
Gangland gamers looking for the next *GTA* will be disappointed, but anyone looking for fun urban action will appreciate *True Crime*'s street cred. (Also available on PS2, GameCube and PC.) ■ Matt Cabral

THE WARRIORS

Rockstar Games | Brawling Action | Xbox

★★★★

Not only does *The Warriors* let you play through the movie of the same name, it starts you several months before the Warriors began their fateful trek from Coney Island to the Bronx and back, as you train, rumble and immerse yourself in gangland New York circa 1979. The game



seamlessly integrates loads of new material into "The Warriors" canon. The biggest draw for many will be the familiar and exceptionally well-told story, but don't discount the gameplay.

The Warriors has loads of replay value. On top of numerous mini-games and a host of multiplayer rumble options, you can make your own gang and replay missions to your heart's content. Sure, it's a standard beat-'em-up, but it's easy to learn and full of variety and fun.

If you're a fan of the movie, getting the game is a no-brainer. *The Warriors* was clearly put together by developers with real passion for the source material. If you like beating the snot out of a host of enemies, dig grimy '80s culture, are into guys in leather vests or just want a solid, fun game, this one's for you. Now, can you dig it? (Also available for PS2.) ■ Ryan Penagos

AMERICA'S ARMY: RISE OF A SOLDIER

Ubisoft | First-Person Military Simulation | Xbox

★★★★

The pace of *America's Army: Rise of a Soldier* is slower than most FPS games, focusing on realism and squad-based teamwork. The pace of development, however, must have been like a high-speed chase in a Humvee, because this grunt forgot to polish his combat boots.



After boot camp, you participate in missions taking on roles such as rifleman, grenadier and sniper. As you progress, you gain experience and skill points that will allow you to extensively customize your character. RPG elements elevate the game above your average shooter, but take heart: details like fatigue, morale and the always-present threat of swift death keep *Rise of a Soldier* firmly planted in reality.

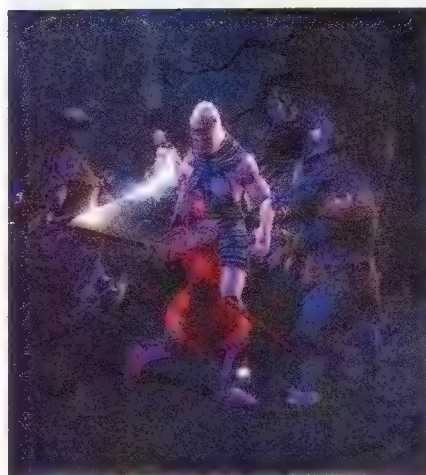
Technical issues are the game's greatest strength and biggest weakness. The expertise afforded the developers by Army experts shines brightly—great pains were taken to make this game an authentic and exciting Army experience. It's also an unrefined experience. Soldiers speak without moving their mouths, the A.I. is less advanced than usual and there are obvious errors in the text.

None of these issues merit a dishonorable discharge, but *Rise of a Soldier* is another of those genre-junkie games that won't cross over into the mainstream. ■ Matthew Chisman

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

Buena Vista Games | Action/Adventure | PS2

★★★



The *Chronicles of Narnia* is a vivid, cinematic game. Following the plot of the film and book, you control the Pevensie sons of Adam and daughters of Eve as their adventure unfolds. All four children share the screen, each with his or her unique abilities, and you control them one at a time to help them escape peril. Key battles typically require you to use the children's different talents in quick succession while somehow keeping the forces of the

White Queen from tearing them limb from limb.

Sadly, *The Chronicles of Narnia* is a flawed game. The camera is fixed, terrain features often block your view and aiming is a nightmare. Many of the challenges take more than twice as long as they remain fun. That leaves *The Chronicles of Narnia* with more frustrating moments than wows, and pulls the whole experience down. Although the jump-in cooperative multiplayer helps pull it back up. (Also available on Xbox, GameCube and PC) ■ TM

CALL OF CTHULHU: DARK CORNERS OF THE EARTH

Bethesda Softworks | First-Person Horror | Xbox

★★★★



Call of *Cthulhu* makes daring choices—choosing game design decisions that might seem wrong in a game not based on the horrifying mythos of H.P. Lovecraft. There's no graphical user interface giving you a crosshair or ammunition indicator. Enemies are deadly, and you are constantly faced with terrors that drive you mildly insane. Run into fishfolk with guns and your vision blurs,

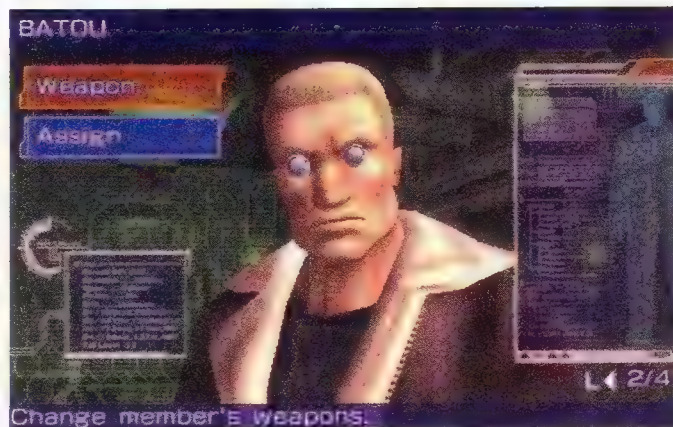
making it even more difficult to shoot. Vertigo has the same effect when you need to be jumping from a high ledge. But as nasty as these handicaps are, it's perfect for a setting where the lives of mortals are nasty, brutish, short and completely insane.

These choices make for a perfect *Call of Cthulhu* game. This is a first-person shooter where your best choice is usually running rather than shooting. The early game is an adventure-style investigation, but after a difficult but dramatic chase scene, you're armed and suddenly able to face the horrors of New England with hot lead. Sure, you may find better graphics, but you'll be hard-pressed to find a scarier game to play late at night. ■ KA

GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX

Bandai | FPS | PSP

★★★



How much you enjoy *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* depends on how big a fan you are of the anime it's based on. The source material is a dialogue-heavy, intellectual show punctuated with moments of cool sci-fi action. That philosophy carries over into the game. You'll frequently sit through both long load times and cut-scenes that take so long to develop the plot that there are actually save points between them.

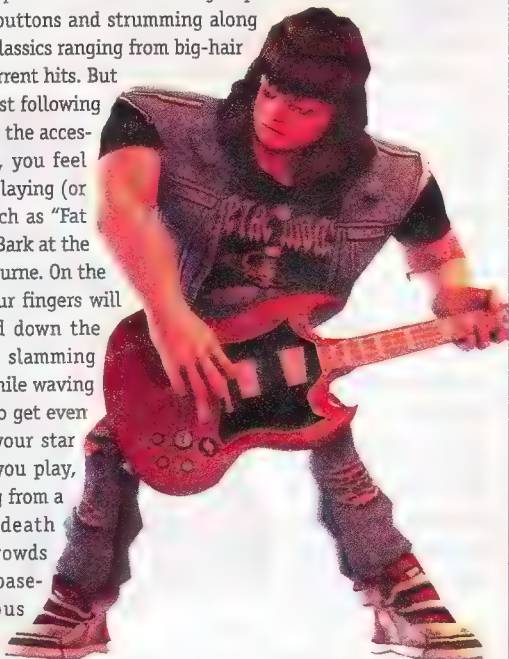
When you do play, the first-person shooting is actually quite good. But the levels are over all too soon and never allow you to get into the game. If you want pure action, you can try finding five other people to play the ad-hoc wireless multiplayer, but the levels are relatively mundane. Only purchase this one if you're a hardcore fan of the anime. ■ KC

GUITAR HERO

Red Octane | Guitar-Playing Rhythm | PS2

★★★★

Guitar Hero is nothing like burning up the frets on a real guitar, but a session of this game is *exactly* like the most excellent air guitar you've played in your entire life. Fundamentally, *Guitar Hero* is a rhythm game with a special, guitar-shaped controller that has you pressing up to five fret buttons and strumming along to covers of guitar classics ranging from big-hair metal to punk to current hits. But this is more than just following the notes—even on the accessible easy settings, you feel like you really are playing (or butchering) hits such as "Fat Lip" by Sum 41 or "Bark at the Moon" by Ozzy Osbourne. On the harder settings, your fingers will be running up and down the frets and you'll be slamming the whammy bar while waving the guitar around to get even more points with your star power. And while you play, your avatar, ranging from a hot punk girl to death incarnate rocks crowds everywhere from basements to enormous halls. ■ KA



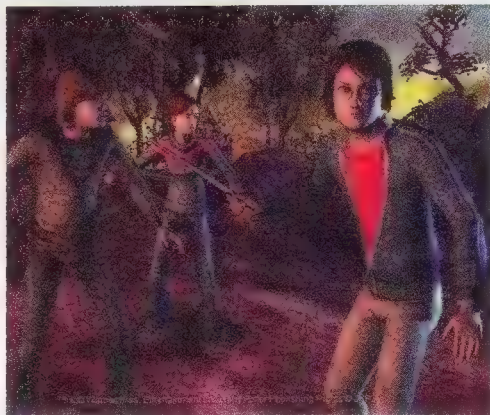
HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Electronic Arts | Action/Adventure | Xbox

★★★

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire puts you in control of Harry and his friends in a kiddie-friendly, squad-based game. You, of course, will want to play as Harry, but a couple of friends can take over for the A.I.-controlled Ron and Hermione. Still, expect them to give you angry looks during the tri-wizard tournament stages, when Harry has to go it alone.

A linear story pulls you through gameplay that's like a simplified action/RPG. The group explores, solves simple puzzles and builds character stats and abilities by collecting beans, frogs and cards. *Goblet of Fire* makes the mistake of choosing the spells for you, distilling combat into a simple button-mashing affair. If players had to choose spells on the fly, this could've been a more interesting game. But *Goblet of Fire* is aimed squarely at the younger set, and for them it's a grand adventure. But anyone with more than one digit in his age may end up as grumpy as Professor Snape. (Also available for PS2, GameCube and PC.) ■ KC



KARAOKE REVOLUTION PARTY

Konami | Dancing/Singing | Xbox

★★★★

If you usually play video games by yourself, it's time to come out of your basement and make some friends, because *Karaoke Revolution Party* is meant to be played with a large group. With this philosophy in mind, Konami has



added tons to its *Karaoke* franchise including duet singing, minigames and customizable avatars. But the biggest change comes from borrowing a page from the *Dance Dance Revolution* series. Plug in a compatible dance pad and your wildest N*Sync fantasies can come true. What? Who said that?

In actual practice, the sing-and-dance mode with the dance pad isn't as fun as it sounds. Like patting your head and rubbing your belly at the same time, it's just too distracting to do both things at once, especially with all the information and instructions on the screen at the same time. But have no fear, the karaoke modes more than make up for it. (Also available for PS2 and GameCube.) ■ KC

KINGDOM OF PARADISE

Sony | Action/RPG | PSP

★★★★



Only available on the PSP, this is an action RPG that easily rivals anything you'd see on a larger console. As Shinbu, a dishonored disciple of martial arts spared the massacre of his

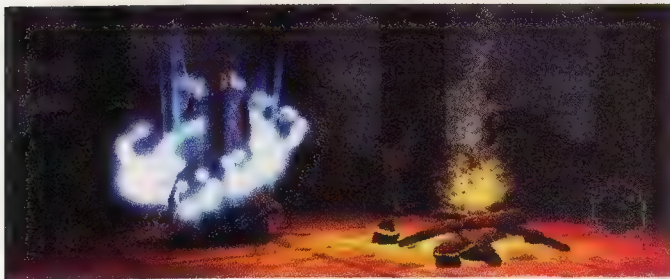
clan, you wander the nation of Ouka around the great Moon Sea to thwart those who would seize control of Ouka in its entirety. While you'll enjoy a deep story, most of that thwarting takes the form of combat.

You have a few varieties of magic at your disposal, and can throw your sword, but the depth of the combat system comes from the hundreds of styles of swordplay that you can mix and match to customize your combat talents. Using scrolls, you arrange fighting techniques into brutal combinations that allow you to land blow after blow on your enemies. While it might take some time to get into the vocabulary, as well as the system of arranging your sword techniques, once you understand the basic mechanics of the game you'll enjoy hacking your way around Ouka. ■ KA

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TACTICS

Electronic Arts | Turn-Based Strategy | PSP

★★★★



The *Lord of the Rings: Tactics* adds another title to EA's growing fellowship of games, offering turn-based strategy with RPG elements. While *Tactics* adds novel features to the library of LOTR games, the game is hobbled by a list of annoyances.

Tactics runs players through a campaign complete with bits from the film, ranging from Frodo's encounter with the Ringwraiths at Weathertop to a conjugal visit from the Balrog deep within the Mines of Moria, playable as either the Fellowship or the forces of Mordor. Each side has hero characters that fight alongside nameless troops, and while it's a thrill to control Sauron, spending eight rounds fighting a random Rider of Rohan tarnishes the shine.

Skills and stat upgrades can be purchased between battles, but you'll need to replay past stages in order to earn enough to sufficiently upgrade and outfit your heroes. The slow pace of play is rarely an issue, but revisiting past victories feels like a violation.

Lord of the Rings: Tactics will satisfy fans of both the story and the genre, but is too rough around the edges to recommend wholeheartedly.

■ Matthew Chisman

METROID PRIME PINBALL

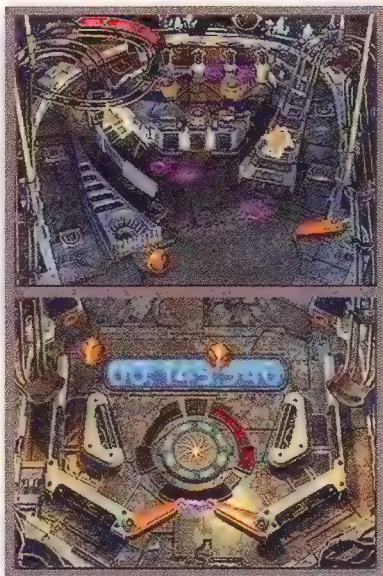
Nintendo | Pinball | Nintendo DS

★★★★

You probably never thought you'd see Samus Aran's morph ball knocked around by pinball bumpers and flippers. Well, leave it to Nintendo to turn its popular *Metroid* franchise into a wacky, fast-paced pinball game complete with all the staple elements of its action/exploration series.

Metroid Prime Pinball looks like a traditional pinball game tweaked with plenty of unmistakable *Metroid* goodness ranging from Space Pirates to Chozo artifacts. The game is slightly more creative than your typical ball-and-bumper fare, featuring boss battles and mini-games. One such game actually has Samus exiting morph ball form and standing to fire her blaster at baddies in the middle of the pinball table.

Metroid Prime Pinball is a creative take on the genre that'll provide a few hours of fun. Unfortunately, as cool as the paint job is, it's still just a pinball game with few tables. *Metroid* fans will want to check it out for the novelty value, but hardcore pinballers may be put off by the presence of puffers and shriekbats. ■ Matt Cabral



MARIO KART DS

Nintendo | Kart Racer | Nintendo DS

★★★★★



The DS's previously dormant Wi-Fi abilities debut with a kart racing bang in *Mario Kart DS*. Borrowing the best elements from previous entries in the series and injecting plenty of original goodies, *Mario Kart DS* is a solid package with tons of replay value. The fact that all this is delivered on Nintendo's new portable makes it even sweeter.

Numerous single-player modes include Grand Prix, Time Trials, VS, Battle and a Mission mode that even features boss battles. These options alone are worth the price of admission, but tack on the wildly addictive Wi-Fi 4-player mode and you've got the greatest *Mario Kart* experience to date. Granted, the online options are bare bones, but given the fact that you can lie in bed (if you've got Wi-Fi) and hurl turtle shells at fellow racers from around the world, we can overlook the limited options.

If you've been grasping for a reason to purchase a DS, this is it. Start your engines! ■ Matt Cabral



SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

Sega | Action/Platformer | Xbox

★★★



Villains make the best protagonists, but while Darth Vader and Hannibal Lecter have a timeless appeal, the same can't be said of Shadow the Hedgehog. The black-and-red speedster Shadow is haunted by the memories of his past and a forgotten deal struck with the leader of an alien race. The goals for each level, Shadow's fate and the game's multiple endings are determined by your decision to follow through with that bargain or not.

This interesting gimmick is quickly lost, however, as you navigate through more than 20 cluttered and confusing levels. Though visually stunning (especially at max speed), we've seen it all before. In fact, the entire game feels like a port of *Sonic Advance 2*...way, way back on the Dreamcast.

Though darkened for older audiences, *Shadow the Hedgehog* feels less like the wild ride it's trying to be, and instead like more of the same old Sonic. (Also available on PS2 and GameCube.) ■ Miguel Betita

THE SIMS 2

Electronic Arts | Simulation | Xbox

★★★

There are three types of gameplay in *The Sims 2*: freeplay, multiplayer and story mode, but none of them truly measure up to the PC game. Story mode is the heart of the game, and you'll need to play it to unlock new objects, clothes, goals and areas to visit. Story mode gives you very specific tasks to complete in sequence.

There's really no "story" in story mode except the one you tell for yourself, since the object of the game is really to collect as much stuff as possible to earn your sim Gold or Platinum status, acknowledgement that it has achieved all it can during its little virtual life. But unless you're the type of gamer who likes obsessively collecting every object, you'll find it's a shallow, materialistic existence. *The Sims 2* is not bad, but it's hardly as compelling as the PC version, and only appeals to a select group. (Available in some form on every platform known to man.) ■ KC



SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR

Sega | Sword-and-Sandal Action | Xbox

★★★★



Spartan: Total Warrior offers epic sword-and-shield action interspersed with mythical boss battles. The action is fast and furious as players frantically block attacks and swipe swords while scurrying in search of health and magic power-ups on a battlefield packed with

enemies. In *Spartan*, your combat skills are measured not by how quickly you mash buttons, but how you strategically attack, counter and block. Advancing while flailing your sword will quickly end in frustration and death. However, you'll find that properly learning to balance your skills on the battlefield is extremely rewarding, leaving you thirsty for more Roman blood.

Unfortunately, *Spartan* stumbles a bit when you're not engaged in these massive battles. Fighting the many bosses is not nearly as satisfying as taking out a dozen or so Roman soldiers with one well-calculated slice. The boss battles also pull you out of the moment as you go from semi-realistic battles to one-on-ones with mythical creatures that feel like *God of War* rip-offs. *Spartan* kicks-ass on the battlefield but occasionally kicks itself in the ass with plodding boss battles. (Also available on PS2 and GameCube.)

■ Matt Cabral

SUIKODEN TACTICS

Konami | Turn-Based Strategy | PS2

★★★★



Suikoden Tactics is actually a prequel to *Suikoden IV*, following Kyril and his companions as they investigate connections between rune cannons and a wave of monsters suddenly appearing across the land. Although you no longer collect the 108 Stars of Destiny—as you do in other *Suikoden* installments—a total of 80 characters can be recruited and customized with items, magic runes and even animals to ride for greater mobility.

But what *Suikoden Tactics* has in options and characters, it lacks in actual execution. The story's pacing falls short due to frequent stilted dialogue sequences. And while the battle mechanics are fun and straightforward, the poor pacing makes this game feel more like an expansion to *Suikoden IV* and less like its own game. By fleshing out the series, this game should appeal to fans of *Suikoden* or tactics games, but fails to live up to its full potential. ■ MB

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

Activision | Extreme Sports | Xbox

★★★★

Tony Hawk's popular skateboarding franchise returns with *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland*, focusing more on the skateboarding elements that established the first two titles and abandoning the outrageous antics of its last two *Underground* incarnations. Neversoft has created a massive skateboarding realm riddled with skating ramps and rails that let you pull off gravity-defying stunts. Each area of L.A. is seamlessly linked, letting you skate from Santa Monica to Beverly Hills without having to sit through a single loading screen.

Story Mode lets you choose from five different characters, each looking to solidify their skateboarding status. In Classic Mode, players can relive the old stages and timed challenges from previous Tony Hawk titles. Create-a-Mode provides players with a wide range of character and stage customization that can be taken online, a new feature that extends the replay value of the game.

Tony Hawk's American Wasteland is a fierce ride that aims to deliver something new for old-school pros and novice skaters alike. (Also available on Xbox 360, PS2 and GC.) ■ Jairo Leon





SAMURAI SHOWDOWN *Anachronism's* Nobunaga promo card has charged to the top of the CCG sales charts.

HOT STUFF What's Happenin' Now!

VIVA LA VINTAGE With all of the focus that's been on *Magic's* Legacy format for the past few months, now might be a decent time to snag some Vintage cards during the format's off-season. Mana Drain, one of Vintage's key cards but banned in Legacy, has fallen \$25 to \$100 as demand for the card has dropped; expect it to kick back up once the Vintage championships come around this summer. Illusionary Mask has also tanked a bit; while its future in Vintage is uncertain in the wake of other powerful combo decks like Flame Vault, it still has the possibility to do some damage there as long as Mishra's Workshop is unrestricted in the format. Sales on other top Vintage cards, while not dropping, have flattened for the time being. So if you've got the dough, strongly consider grabbing them now.

LET'S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN *Anachronism's* time-skewing battle system has become quite popular, especially with its unconventional flat rarity for most cards. The few cards that have bucked the fixed-rarity scheme—convention promos—are wrecking quite a bit of house now too. Tournament prize Nobunaga, a Japanese warrior who gains you a life every time a reveal ability is used, has been selling for up to three digits, while fel-

low Japanese warrior Hattori Hanzo is in the \$30-40 range and tournament organizer promo Seth, an Egyptian inspiration, has been taking in \$25 a pop.

MAKING A PLAY Wizards of the Coast will be rolling out a new set of pro player cards next year. The 25-card set, which will be inserted randomly into *Magic* tournament packs and fat packs in the next block, will feature 20 top current pros as well as the five new inductees into the *Magic* Hall of Fame. This year's set of insert cards has come down in price, from its one-time \$30 level to about \$10, now that *Ravnica* has become more widely distributed.

ROYAL REWARDS In case you were stuck with a few goofs from *WWE Raw Deal's* last base set, the *Royal Rumble* expansion will include fixed versions of five misprinted ultra-rares from *Survivor Series 3*. They are Lou Thesz Press, The Straps Are Down, The Icon... The Showstopper... The Main Event, Top Rope Elbow Drop and Overhand Chair Shot. The set's due to hit stores in the middle of January. Meanwhile, the new *Raw Deal* Championship Belt and Women's Championship Belt prize cards are selling for a cool \$30 a pop. ■ Jeremy Smith

MAGIC ALPHA LIMITED EDITION

Cards have black borders. Alpha cards have rounded corners when compared to Beta cards. Beta cards are valued at 0.8x-1.0x Alpha versions. Unlimited cards are valued at 0.6x-0.8x Alpha versions for cards not reprinted in Revised and 0.2x-0.4x for all others.

Unlisted Rares	12.00	15.00	18.00
Unlisted Uncommons	2.00	3.00	4.00
Unlisted Commons	.75	1.00	1.50

● Ancestral Recall	R 600.00	700.00	800.00
● Animate Dead	U 12.00	15.00	18.00
● Ankh of Mishra	R 30.00	35.00	40.00
● Armageddon	R 50.00	60.00	70.00
● Bad Moon	R 40.00	50.00	60.00
● Badlands	R 100.00	125.00	150.00
● Balance	R 60.00	70.00	80.00
● Bayou	R 100.00	125.00	150.00
● Berserk	U 70.00	80.00	90.00
● Birds of Paradise	R 125.00	150.00	175.00
● Black Knight	U 8.00	10.00	12.00
● Black Lotus	R 1200.00	1500.00	1800.00
● Black Vise	U 8.00	10.00	12.00
● Blaze of Glory	R 20.00	25.00	30.00
● Blessing	R 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Brineguyser	R 40.00	50.00	60.00
● Camouflage	U 4.00	5.00	6.00
● Channel	U 4.00	5.00	6.00
● Chaos Orb	R 80.00	90.00	100.00
● Clone	U 10.00	12.00	15.00
● Consecrate Land	U 4.00	5.00	6.00
● Contract from Below	R 85.00	90.00	100.00
● Control Magic	U 5.00	6.00	7.00
● Copper Tablet	U 8.00	10.00	12.00
● Copy Artifact	R 25.00	30.00	35.00
● Counterspell	U 20.00	25.00	30.00
● Crusade	R 30.00	40.00	50.00
● Cyclopean Tomb	R 50.00	60.00	70.00
● Dark Ritual	C 10.00	12.00	15.00
● Darkpact	R 12.00	15.00	18.00
● Demoniac Attorney	R 20.00	25.00	30.00
● Demonic Hordes	R 40.00	50.00	60.00
● Demonic Tutor	U 50.00	60.00	70.00
● Disenchant	C 3.00	4.00	5.00
● Disrupting Scepter	R 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Dragon Whelp	U 8.00	10.00	12.00
● Earthquake	R 20.00	25.00	30.00
● Elvish Archers	R 30.00	40.00	50.00
● Fastbond	R 50.00	60.00	70.00
● Fireball	C 3.00	4.00	5.00
● Force of Nature	R 50.00	60.00	70.00
● Forcefield	R 70.00	80.00	90.00
● Fork	R 80.00	90.00	100.00
● Fungusaur	R 20.00	25.00	30.00
● Gaea's Liege	R 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Gauntlet of Might	R 80.00	90.00	100.00
● Giant Growth	C 3.00	4.00	5.00
● Goblin King	R 25.00	30.00	35.00
● Howling Mine	R 40.00	50.00	60.00
● Hypnotic Specter	U 30.00	40.00	50.00
● Ice Storm	U 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Illusionary Mask	R 100.00	125.00	150.00
● Jade Statue	U 8.00	10.00	12.00
● Jayemdae Tome	R 30.00	35.00	40.00
● Juggernaut	U 12.00	15.00	18.00
● Lich	R 40.00	50.00	60.00
● Lightning Bolt	C 10.00	12.00	15.00
● Llanowar Elves	C 7.00	9.00	12.00
● Lord of Atlantis	R 25.00	30.00	35.00
● Lord of the Pit	R 50.00	60.00	70.00
● Mahamoti Djinn	R 30.00	35.00	40.00
● Mana Fae	R 25.00	30.00	35.00
● Mana Short	R 30.00	35.00	40.00
● Mana Vault	R 70.00	80.00	90.00
● Mind Twist	R 80.00	90.00	100.00
● Moat Emerald	R 400.00	450.00	500.00
● Moat Jet	R 450.00	500.00	550.00
● Moat Pearl	R 400.00	450.00	500.00
● Moat Ruby	R 400.00	450.00	500.00
● Moat Sapphire	R 500.00	600.00	700.00
● Nature's Selection	R 30.00	35.00	40.00
● Necromancy	R 40.00	50.00	60.00
● Ninethorn Paladin	R 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Orishan Artillery	U 10.00	12.00	15.00
● Orishan Driftmachine	U 10.00	12.00	15.00
● Personal Incarnation	R 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Plateau	R 100.00	125.00	150.00
● Plutonic Blast	U 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Ragging River	R 20.00	25.00	30.00
● Red Elemental Blast	C 5.00	6.00	7.00
● Regrowth	U 12.00	15.00	18.00
● Rock Hydra	R 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Royal Assassin	R 60.00	70.00	80.00
● Savannah	R 100.00	125.00	150.00
● Savannah Lions	R 40.00	50.00	60.00
● Scrubland	R 100.00	125.00	150.00
● Sengir Vampire	U 12.00	15.00	18.00
● Serra Angel	U 30.00	40.00	50.00
● Shivan Dragon	R 125.00	150.00	175.00
● Shrine	C 25.00	30.00	35.00
● Sol Ring	U 50.00	60.00	70.00
● Stasis	R 30.00	40.00	50.00
● Swords to Plowshares	U 15.00	18.00	22.00
● Tajiga	R 125.00	150.00	175.00
● Terror	C 3.00	4.00	5.00
● The Hive	R 15.00	20.00	25.00
● Time Vault	R 125.00	150.00	175.00
● Time Walk	R 400.00	500.00	600.00
● Time Twister	R 300.00	350.00	400.00
● Tropical Island	R 175.00	200.00	225.00
● Two-Headed Giant of Forays	R 20.00	25.00	30.00

NAME	RARITY	LOW	MEDIAN	HIGH
● Underground Sea	R	275.00	300.00	325.00
● Verduran Enchantress	R	30.00	40.00	50.00
● Vesuvan Doppelganger	R	100.00	125.00	150.00
● Volcanic Island (Beta)	R	275.00	300.00	325.00
● Wheel of Fortune	R	100.00	125.00	150.00
● White Knight	U	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Will-o'-The-Wisp	R	30.00	40.00	50.00
● Winter Orb	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
● Word of Command	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
● Wrath of God	R	80.00	90.00	100.00
● Zombie Master	R	15.00	20.00	25.00

BASE SET FOILS

● Adarkar Wastes	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
● Battlefield Forge	R	15.00	18.00	22.00
● Birds of Paradise	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
● Blinding Angel	C	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Blinking Spirit	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Brushland	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Caves of Koilos	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● City of Brass	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Cruel Edict	U	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Diabolic Tutor	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Dures	C	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Felwar Stone	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Gift of Estates	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Glorious Anthem	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Grave Pact	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Hell's Caretaker	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Hypnotic Specter	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
● Jester's Cap	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Karolus Forest	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Kird Ape	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Llanowar Elves	C	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Llanowar Wastes	R	20.00	25.00	30.00
● Mahamoti Djinn	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Mana Leak	C	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Merchant Scroll	U	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Paladin on Vex	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
● Quicksand	U	5.00	7.00	9.00
● Rath Dragon	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Serra Angel	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Shivan Dragon	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Shivan Reef	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Sulfurous Springs	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Thundermere	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Undermound River	R	15.00	18.00	22.00
● Underworld Dreams	R	7.00	8.00	10.00
● Urza's Mine	U	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Urza's Power Plant	U	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Urza's Tower	U	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Verdant Force	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Will-o'-The-Wisp	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Wrath of God	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
● Yavimaya Coast	R	15.00	20.00	25.00

For *Magic* base sets Revised and later and expansions Fallen Empires and later, use this table unless otherwise noted. Foil versions of listed rares are 1.5x-2.5x their value. Reprinted cards in Revised through Ninth Edition are worth 0.8x-1x their original versions.

Unlisted Rares	1.00	1.50	2.00
Unlisted Uncommons	.25	.50	1.00
Unlisted Commons	.10	.15	.25
Unlisted Foil Rares	2.00	3.00	4.00
Unlisted Foil Uncommons	.50	1.00	1.50
Unlisted Foil Commons	.25	.50	1.00

ARABIAN NIGHTS

Unlisted Rares	2.00	3.00	4.00	
Unlisted Uncommons	1.00	2.00	3.00	
Unlisted Commons	.25	.50	1.00	
● Ali from Cairo	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
● Army of Allah	C	2.00	3.00	4.00
● Bazaar of Baghdad	U	150.00	175.00	200.00
● City in a Bottle	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● City of Brass	U	25.00	30.00	35.00
● Desert	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Diamond Valley	R	30.00	40.00	50.00
● Drop of Honey	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
● Elephant Graveyard	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Erhnam Djinn	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Flying Men	C	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Guardian Beast	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
● Ith-Biff Efreit	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Island of Wak-Wak	R	20.00	25.00	30.00
● Jibed	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
● Juzam Djinn	R	100.00	125.00	150.00
● Khazal Choul	U	15.00	18.00	22.00
● King Solomon	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Kind Ape	C	2.00	3.00	4.00
● Library of Alexandria	U	150.00	175.00	200.00
● Merchant Ship	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Mijae Djinn	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Mountain	C	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Old Man of the Sea	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
● Oubiette	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Pyramids	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Ring of Ma'ru	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Rukh Egg	C	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Serenidip Djinn	R	15.00	18.00	22.00
● Serenidip Efreit	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
● Shahrazad	R	30.00	40.00	50.00
● Singing Tree	U	15.00	18.00	22.00
● Sorceress Queen	U	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Stone-Throwing Devils	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Yvone Efreit	R	4.00	5.00	6.00

ANTIQUITIES

Unlisted Rares	2.00	3.00	4.00	
Unlisted Uncommons50	1.00	1.50	
Unlisted Commons25	.50	1.00	
○ Argvian Archaeologist	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Candalaria of Tavnos	R	30.00	40.00	50.00

MAGIC DATA

C=COMMON U=UNCOMMON R=RARE

●ARTIFACT ●BLACK ●BLUE ●GOLD ●GREEN ●RED ●WHITE ●LAND

WENT UP WENT DOWN HEAVY TRADING NEW SET

NAME	RARITY	LOW	MEDIAN	HIGH
Colossus of Sardia	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Hurk's Recall	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Worm Tower	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
Mishra's Factory (Fall)	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Mishra's Factory (Spring)	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Mishra's Factory (Summer)	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
Mishra's Factory (Winter)	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
Mishra's Workshop	R	200.00	225.00	250.00
Power Artifact	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
Strip Mine (Horizon, Even)	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Strip Mine (Horizon, Uneven)	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Strip Mine (No Horizon)	U	4.00	6.00	8.00
Strip Mine (Small Tower)	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Su-Chi	U	4.00	6.00	8.00
Tawnos's Coffin	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Transmute Artifact	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
Triskelion	R	5.00	7.00	9.00

LEGENDS

Unlisted Rares	3.00	4.00	5.00	
Unlisted Uncommons	50	1.00	1.50	
Unlisted Commons	25	50	1.00	
● Acid Rain	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● All Hallow's Eve	R	20.00	25.00	30.00
● Angus Mackenzie	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Arcades Sabboth	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Bartel Runeaxe	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Chain Lightning	C	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Chains of Mephistopheles	R	50.00	60.00	70.00
● Chromium	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Cleansing	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Commandant Crossroads	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Crimson Kobolds	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Crookshank Kobolds	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Dakkon Blackblade	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Darkness	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Divine Intervention	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Eureka	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Field of Dreams	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Firestorm Phoenix	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Force Spike	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Gravity Sphere	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Gwendlyn Di Corsi	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Hazezon Tamar	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Hell's Caretaker	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Hellfire	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
● In the Eye of Chaos	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Invoke Prejudice	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Jacques le Vert	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Karakas	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Kobold Drill Sergeant	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Kobold Overlord	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Kobold Taskmaster	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Kobolds of Kher Keep	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Land Equilibrium	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Land Tax	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Living Plane	U	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Mana Drain	U	80.00	100.00	120.00
● Master of the Hunt	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
● Mirror Universe	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
● Moat	R	50.00	60.00	70.00
● Nether Void	R	50.00	60.00	70.00
● Nical Bolas	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Palladia-Mors	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Plat Queen	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Ramesses Overdark	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Rasputin Dreamweaver	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Reset	U	15.00	20.00	25.00
● Rohgahh of Kher Keep	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
● Softkane the Swamp King	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
● Sorinal Villain	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Storm World	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Sword of the Ages	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Sylvan Library	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Tetsuo Umazawa	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
● The Abyss	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
● The Talemade at P. Vale	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
● Thunder Spirit	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Underworld Dreams	U	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Yavricst Asmadi	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
● Wallow Satyr	R	2.00	3.00	4.00

○ Archangel	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Fireblast	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Goblin Recruiter	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Necromancy	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
● River Boe	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Tide	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Undiscovered Paradise	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Vampiric Tutor	R	12.00	15.00	18.00

WEATHERLIGHT

○ Abyeance	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
● Gaea's Blessing	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Gemstone Mine	U	2.00	3.00	4.00
● Lotus Vale	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Null Road	R	8.00	10.00	12.00

TEMPEST

● Aluren	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Ancient Tomb	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Chill	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Cursed Scroll	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
● Diabolic Edict	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Earthcraft	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Gladami, Lord of Leaves	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
● Grindstone	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Horned Silver	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Intuition	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Jackal Pup	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Jet Metastall	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Living Petal	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Lotus Petal	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Mogg Fanatic	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Muscle Silver	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Procanada	R	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Rathi Dracon	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Reanimate	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Reflecting Pool	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Sapphire Medallion	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Scroll Rack	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Solitari Monk	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Solitari Priest	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Time Warp	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Truesilver Rider	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
● Verdant Force	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
● Wasteland	U	7.00	9.00	12.00
● Winged Silver	C	1.00	1.50	2.00

STRONGHOLD

● Crystalline Silver	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
● Living Pact	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Megrim	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Most Diamond	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Silver Queen	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
● Well of Blossoms	U	1.00	1.50	2.00

EXODUS

● City of Traitors	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
● Coat of Arms	R	6.00	7.00	9.00

THE DARK

Unlisted Uncommons	50	1.00	1.50
Unlisted Commons	25	50	1.00
● Ball Lightning	R	10.00	15.00
● Goblin Wizard	R	3.00	5.00
● Maze of th	U	8.00	12.00
○ Preacher	U	4.00	5.00

URZA'S SAGA

● Argothian Enchantress	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
● Durres	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
● Gahwyse	C	1.00	1.50	2.00

FALLEN EMPIRES

Hymn to Tourach	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
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ICE AGE

Adarkar Wastes	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Brushland	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Icy Manipulator	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Illusions of Grandeur	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Jester's Cap	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Karpusen Forest	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Neopotence	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Pyroclasm	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Sulfurous Springs	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Swords to Plowshares	U	2.00	3.00	4.00
Underground River	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Zuran Urb	R	1.00	2.00	3.00

CHRONICLES

City of Brass	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Concordant Crossroads	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Nicol Bolas	R	2.00	3.00	4.00

HOMELANDS

Baron Sengir	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
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ALLIANCES

Arcane Denial	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Elvish Saint Guide	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Force of Will	U	15.00	20.00	25.00
Kjeldoran Outpost	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Lake of the Dead	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Thawing Glaciers	R	2.00	3.00	4.00

MIRAGE

Catacomb Dragon	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Enlightened Tutor	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Lion's Eye Diamond	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Mystical Tutor	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Phyrexian Dreadnought	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Spirit of the Night	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Tezka's Dragon	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Worldly Tutor	U	1.00	1.50	2.00

VISIONS

Archangel	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Fireblast	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Goblin Recruiter	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Necromancy	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
River Boe	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Tithe	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Undiscovered Paradise	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Vampiric Tutor	R	12.00	15.00	18.00

WEATHERLIGHT

Abeysance	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Bard's Blessing	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Gemstone Mine	U	2.00	3.00	4.00
Lotus Vale	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Null Rod	R	8.00	10.00	12.00

TEMPEST

Aluren	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Ancient Tomb	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Chill	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Cursed Scroll	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Diabolic Edict	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Earthcraft	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Eladamri, Lord of Leaves	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Grindstone	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Horned Silver	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Intuition	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Jackal Pup	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Jet Medallion	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Living Death	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Lotus Petal	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
Magic Fanfare	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Muscle Silver	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Prosopeia	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Rathi Dragon	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Resonance	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Reflecting Pool	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Sapphire Medallion	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Scroll Rack	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Soliant Monk	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Soliant Priest	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Time Warp	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Treasured Rider	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Verdant Force	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Wasteland	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Winged Silver	C	1.00	1.50	2.00

STRONGHOLD

Crystalline Silver	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Grave Pact	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Megrim	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Mox Diamond	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Silver Queen	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Wall of Blossoms	U	1.00	1.50	2.00

EXODUS

City of Traitors	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Coat of Arms	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Hatred	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Path of Brutality	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Recurring Nightmare	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Survival of the Fittest	R	8.00	10.00	12.00

URZA'S SAGA

Argothian Enchantress	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Durres	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Exhume	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Exploration	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Gaea's Cradle	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Gilded Drake	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Glorious Anthem	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Goblin Lackey	U	6.00	8.00	10.00
Lifeline	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Lightning Dragon	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Morohino	R	15.00	18.00	22.00
Persecute	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Planar Void	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Priest of Titania	C	1.00	2.00	3.00
Serra Avatar	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Serra's Sanctum	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Shivan Hellkite	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Smokestack	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Sneak Attack	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Strike of Genius	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Time Spiral	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Tolarian Academy	R	15.00	18.00	22.00
Voltaic Key	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Worship	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Yavgmth's Will	R	8.00	10.00	12.00

URZA'S LEGACY

Cloud of Faeries (Foil)	C	4.00	5.00	6.00
Deranged Hermit	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Faerie Concave	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Goblin Welder	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Goblin Welder (Foil)	R	80.00	90.00	100.00

HOT 10 MAGIC CARDS

1. NEW DUAL LANDS \$15-18

Ravnica: City of Guilds

This month's big news isn't the fact that the new dual lands are still cleaning house everywhere; everyone knows how great they are. It's how Life from the Loam came out of nowhere as a \$2 card to surge all the way up to \$7, and our second-place slot this month. It first made waves in Extended at Pro Tour: Los Angeles in the Dredge-A-Tag deck and has also shown up in the Solitary Confinement/Seismic Assault build that won Grand Prix: Bilbao for French player Olivier Ruel. In Ravnica, we've yet to see Glimpse the Unthinkable and Circu in any top-tier tournament decks, but the casual players love 'em. Dimir Cutpurse and Grave-Shell Scarab have been tearing it up in Standard. Char has done the same and has also become a beast in Boros Deck Wins in Extended. We'll leave Birds, Force and Wrath as an exercise for you, our beloved readers. ■ JS



2. LIFE FROM THE LOAM \$7

Ravnica: City of Guilds



3. BIRDS OF PARADISE \$12

Ravnica: City of Guilds



4. GLIMPSE THE UNTHINKABLE \$12

Ravnica: City of Guilds



5. CIRCU, DIMIR LOBOTOMIST \$8

Ravnica: City of Guilds

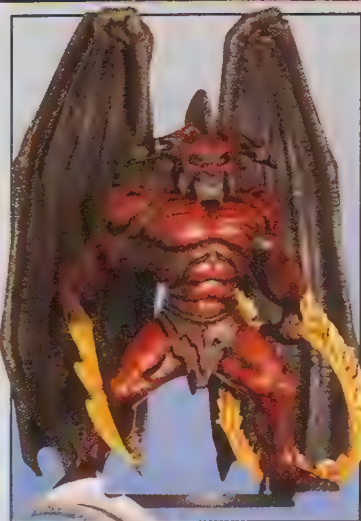


6. FORCE OF WILL \$20

Alliances



HOT 10 MINIATURES



1. BALOR \$18

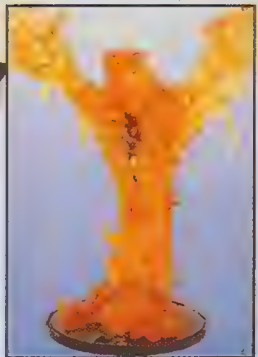
D&D Minis Underdark

In the game of musical chairs that has been the minis world for the last year or two, it's *Dungeons & Dragons Minis'* turn to grab the hot seat. Its latest expansion, *Underdark*, snagged six of the top 10 slots this month on our hot list. Gigantic evil demon Balor is far and away the hottest figure in the minis market. His sick enslave and vorpal abilities are nearly as scary as his countenance. Iron Golem takes our second spot. His ability to ignore all spells is a hot one, and he's got a bunch of others, including fearless and immune fire. Mounted Drow Patrol, Artemis Entreri, Large Deep Dragon and Death Slaad fill out D&D's showings. The other games could only manage one fig apiece, with *Marvel HeroClix's* giant Dark Phoenix coming in at a respectable third, and *Star Wars' AT-ST*, *Axis & Allies Minis' T-34/76* and *DC HeroClix' The Flash* taking up the rest of our list. ■ JS



2. IRON GOLEM \$12

D&D Minis Underdark



3. DARK PHOENIX \$18

Marvel HeroClix Wizard World Promo



4. MOUNTED DROW PATROL \$12

D&D Minis Underdark



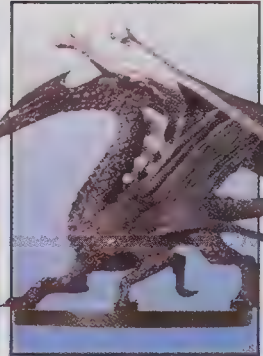
5. ARTEMIS ENTRERI \$12

D&D Minis Underdark



6. AT-ST \$20

Star Wars Minis Universe



7. LARGE DEEP DRAGON \$12

D&D Minis Underdark



8. DEATH SLAAD \$9

D&D Minis Underdark



9. T-34/76 \$10

Axis & Allies Minis: Base Set



10. THE FLASH \$20

DC HeroClix Icons

NAME	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Grim Monolith	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Memory Jar (Foil)	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
Mother of Ruins	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Rack and Ruin (Foil)	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Radiant, Archangel	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Radiant, Archangel (Foil)	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
Rancor	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Tinker	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Tinker (Foil)	U	15.00	18.00	22.00
Treetop Village	U	1.00	1.50	2.00

URZA'S DESTINY

Academy Rector	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Covetous Dragon (Foil)	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Elish Piper	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Mastore	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Mastore (Foil)	R	20.00	25.00	30.00
Metaworker	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Phryxian Necator	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Pow Under	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Powder Keg	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Reolensian	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Rofellos, Llan, Emissary	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Thran Dynamo	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Urza's Incubator	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Yavogmoh's Bargain (Foil)	R	15.00	20.00	25.00

MERCADIAN MASQUES

Brainstorm (Foil)	C	20.00	25.00	30.00
Bribery	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Counterspell (Foil)	C	7.00	9.00	12.00
Dark Ritual (Foil)	C	15.00	20.00	25.00
Food Chain	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Gush (Foil)	C	2.00	2.50	3.00
Land Grant (Foil)	C	8.00	10.00	12.00
Misdirection	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Misdirection (Foil)	R	30.00	40.00	50.00
Rishadan Port	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Squeez, Goblin Nabob	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Squeez, Goblin Nabob (Foil)	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
Story Circle	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Two-Headed Dragon	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

NEMESIS

Accumulated Knowledge	C	1.00	1.50	2.00
Accum. Knowledge (Foil)	C	10.00	12.00	15.00
Tangle Wire	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

PROPHECY

Avatar of Woe	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Avatar of Woe (Foil)	R	25.00	30.00	35.00

INVASION

Absorb	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Cross, the Purger	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Derigaz, the Igniter	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Dromar, the Banisher	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Fact or Fiction	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Fact or Fiction (Foil)	U	6.00	8.00	10.00
Reya Dawnhammer	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Reya Dawnhammer (Foil)	R	40.00	50.00	60.00
Rith, the Awakener	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Sterling Grove	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Treva, the Renewer	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Undermine	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Urza's Rage	R	2.00	3.00	4.00

PLANESHIFT

Draco	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Ertac, the Corrupted (Alt. Art Foil)	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
Flamethrower Kavu	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Meddling Mage	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Meddling Mage (Foil)	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
Orim's Chant	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Orim's Chant (Foil)	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
Skyship Weatherlight (Alt. Art Foil)	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
Tahnarath, Talruum Hero (Alt. Art Foil)	R	30.00	35.00	40.00

APOCALYPSE

Fire/Ice	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Fire/Ice (Foil)	U	12.00	15.00	18.00
Goblin Ringleader	U	2.00	2.50	3.00
Llanover Wastes	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Pernicious Deed	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Pernicious Deed (Foil)	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
Shivan Reef	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Spiritmonger	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Vindicate	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Yavogmoh's Coast	R	6.00	8.00	10.00

ODYSSEY

Call of the Herd	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Entomb	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Haunting Echoes	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Indescent Angel	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Mirari	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Psychatog	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Psychatog (Foil)	U	4.00	5.00	6.00
Shadowmane Infiltrator	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Skeletal Sorying (Foil)	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Standstill	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Traumatize	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Vampiric Dragon	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Wild Mongrel (Foil)	C	6.00	8.00	10.00

TORMENT

Arrocan Wurm	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Basking Rootwalkers (Foil)	C	4.00	5.00	6.00
Cabal Coffers	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Chainer's Edict	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Circular Lore	U	2.00	3.00	4.00
Grim Lavamancer	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Nantuko Shade	R	6.00	8.00	10.00

JUDGMENT

Browbeat	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Burning Wish	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

NAME	R	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00
Cabal Therapy	U	3.00	4.00	5.00	
Cunning Wish	R	7.00	9.00	12.00	
Cunning Wish (Foil)	R	25.00	30.00	35.00	
Living Wish	R	5.00	7.00	9.00	
Mirari's Wake	R	3.00	4.00	5.00	
Phantom Nishoba	R	3.00	4.00	5.00	
Worldgorger Dragon (Foil)	R	12.00	15.00	18.00	

ONSLAUGHT

Blistering Firecat	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Bloodstained Mire	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Exalted Angel	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Exalted Angel (Foil)	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
Flooded Strand	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Flooded Strand (Foil)	R	25.00	30.00	35.00
Goblin Pledrider	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Goblin Shameshooter	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Jarath, Leaning Titan	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Naturalize (Foil)	C	3.00	4.00	5.00
Patrician's Biddino	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Polluted Delta	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Polluted Delta (Foil)	R	30.00	40.00	50.00
Ravenous Baloth	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Roxix Bladewing	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Silves, Rogue Elemental	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Visara the Dreadful	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Windswept Heath	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Wounded Foothills	R	7.00	9.00	12.00

LEGIONS

Akroma Angel of Wrath	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Akroma Angel of Wrath (Foil)	R	30.00	40.00	50.00
Kinnmouth Dragon	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Kress Cloudscraper	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Phase the Unruly	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Seron of Darkness	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Seraphim Muse	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Toxin Sliver	R	2.00	3.00	4.00

SCOURGE

Brain Freeze	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Decree of Justice	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Eternal Dragon	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Forgotten Ancient	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Goblin War Chief	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Silver Overlord	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Stifle	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Tendrils of Agony (Foil)	U	6.00	8.00	10.00

MIRRODIN

Arc-Slooper	R	1.00	1.50	2.00
Chrome Max	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Gilded Lotus	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Glimmerveil	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Goblin Charbelcher	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Isocron Scepter	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Lightning Greaves	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Mindslayer	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Oblivion Stone	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Platinum Angel	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Shrapnel Blast	U	1.00	1.50	2.00
Solemn Simulacrum	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Thirst for Knowledge (Foil)	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Tooth and Nail	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Troll Ascetic	R	4.00	6.00	8.00

DARKSTEEL

Aether Vial	U	2.00	3.00	4.00
Archbound Ravager	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Blinkmoth Nexus	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Darksteel Colossus	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Death Cloud	R	1.00	1.50	2.00
Pristine Angel	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Sundering Titan	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Sword of Fire and Ice	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Sword of Light and Shadow	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

FIFTH DAWN

Crucible of Worlds	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Crucible of Worlds (Foil)	R	15.00	20.00	25.00
Engineered Exolaves	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
Eternal Witness	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
Eternal Witness (Foil)	U	10.00	12.00	15.00
Magma Jet	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Memhrass Vampire	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Relentless Rats	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
Vedalken Shackles	R	4.00	5.00	6.00

CHAMPIONS OF KAMIGAWA

KAMIGATA				
• Baseto, Vito's Stealer	AIR	2.00	2.50	3.00
• Cranial Extraction	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Eight-and-a-Half-Tails	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Forbidden Orchard	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Gifts Unleashed	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
• Isamaru, Heir of Konda	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
• Kodama of the North Tree	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
• Kodama's Reach (Foil)	C	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Kokusho, the Evening Star	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Mokko, the Clouded Monk	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Nozumi Shortfano	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Sakura-Tribe Elder (Foil)	C	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Sensei's Divining Top	U	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Yosei, the Morning Star	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

NAME	RARITY	LOW	MEDIAN	HIGH
SAVIORS OF KAMIGAWA ★				
• Eravo, Soratani Ascendant	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Kaseemaru, First to Suffer	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
• Pithino Needle	R	15.00	18.00	22.00
• Thoughts of Ruin	R	1.00	1.50	2.00
• Twincast	R	12.00	15.00	18.00

RAVNICA ★				
• Birds of Paradise	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
• Char	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Circo, Dimir Lobotomist	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Dark Confidant	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Dimir Colours	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Dimir Doppeldealer	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Firemane Acolyte	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Gleancrawler	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
• Grimace the Unthinkable	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
• Grave-Shell Scarab	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Hunted Dragon	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Hunted Horror	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
• Hunted Troll	R	1.00	1.50	2.00
• Life from the Loam	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
• Lightning Helix	U	2.00	2.50	3.00
• Luxodion Hierarch	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Moonlight Berserker	R	1.00	1.50	2.00
• Overgrown Tomb	R	15.00	18.00	22.00
• Plaque Boiler	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Putrefy	U	1.00	2.00	3.00
• Sacred Foundry	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Shadow of Doubt	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
• Sunforger	R	1.00	2.00	3.00
• Temple Garden	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Vineshaker Kudzu	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Vicious Zombie	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
• Watery Grave	R	15.00	18.00	22.00

PROMO CARDS ★				
Unlisted Promos	2.00	3.00	4.00	
• Accumulated Knowledge (DCI Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Argonian Enchantress (Foil)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
• Armageddon (Foil)	PR	30.00	40.00	50.00
• Balance (DCI Foil)	PR	50.00	60.00	70.00
• Ball Lightning (Foil)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Brainstorm (DCI Foil)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
• City of Brass (Junior Super Series Foil)	PR	15.00	20.00	25.00

• Counterspell (DCI Alpha Foil)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
• Counterspell (DCI Foil)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Counterspell (DCI Non-Foil)	PR	5.00	7.00	9.00
• Crusade (Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Deranged Hermit (DCI Foil)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Diabolic Edict (Foil)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
• Disenchant (DCI Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Duress (DCI Foil)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Duress (Foil)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
• Enlightened Tutor (Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Exalted Angel (DCI Foil)	PR	80.00	100.00	120.00
• Fact or Fiction (DCI Foil)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Fireblast (Foil)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Flametongue Kavu (DCI Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Forest (Guru)	PR	25.00	35.00	45.00
• Gaea's Cradle (Foil)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
• Gemstone Mine (DCI Foil)	PR	100.00	125.00	150.00
• Gleancrawler (Pre-release)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Grim Lavamancer (DCI Foil)	PR	80.00	100.00	120.00
• Hammer of Bogardan (Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Hermit Druid (Foil)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Hinder (Textless)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Hypnotic Specter (DCI Alpha Foil)	PR	20.00	25.00	30.00

• Icy Manipulator (DCI Alpha Foil)	PR	6.00	10.00	12.00
• Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni (Pre-release)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Intuition (Foil)	PR	30.00	40.00	50.00
• Island (Guru)	PR	30.00	40.00	50.00
• Karn, Silver Golem (Foil)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
• Lightning Bolt (Foil)	PR	20.00	25.00	30.00
• Lightning Dragon (Pre-release)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
• Living Death (Foil)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
• Llanowar Elves (Foil)	PR	5.00	7.00	9.00
• Lu Bu, Master-at-Arms	PR	7.00	9.00	12.00
• Mana Crypt	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
• Mana Leak (Foil)	PR	7.00	9.00	12.00
• Mana Leak (Textless)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Memory Lapse (Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Mishra's Factory (DCI Foil)	PR	80.00	100.00	120.00
• Moog Fanatic (Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Mountain (Guru)	PR	25.00	35.00	45.00
• Necropotence (Foil)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Oath of Druids (Foil)	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
• Pernicious Deed (DCI Foil)	PR	100.00	125.00	150.00
• Phyrexian Negator (DCI Foil)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Plains (Guru)	PR	25.00	35.00	45.00
• Powder Keg (DCI Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Priest of Titania (Foil)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
• Psychatog (DCI Foil)	PR	5.00	7.00	9.00
• Pyroclasm (Textless)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Rancor (DCI Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Reanimate (DCI Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• River Boa (Foil)	PR	5.00	7.00	9.00
• Royal Assassin (JSS Foil)	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
• Sengir Vampire (Beastfoot)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Serra Angel (Foil)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
• Serra Avatar (Foil)	PR	25.00	30.00	35.00
• Sol Ring (DCI Foil)	PR	100.00	125.00	150.00
• Solari Priest (Foil)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
• Stroke of Genius (Foil)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Swamp (Guru)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
• Swords to Plowshares (Foil)	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
• Time Warp (Foil)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
• Trademark Rider (Foil)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
• Vampire Tutor (Foil)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
• Wall of Blossoms (Foil)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
• Wasteland (Foil)	PR	15.00	20.00	25.00

HEROCLIX

The Collectable Miniatures Game

For all unlisted HeroClix figures, please use this table. Purple-rimmed versions of uniques are worth 2x-2.5x silver-rimmed ones. Marvel Universe figures are 0.6x-1x their originals.

Unlisted Level 1-5 Figures	1.00	2.00	3.00
Unlisted Level 6 Figures	10.00	12.00	15.00
Unlisted PR3 Figures	4.00	6.00	8.00
Unlisted PR4 Figures	6.00	8.00	10.00
Unlisted PR5 Figures	8.00	10.00	12.00
Unlisted PR6 Figures	10.00	12.00	15.00

DC HEROCLIX: HYPERTIME ★				
Blue Beetle/Ted Kord	PR5	8.00	10.00	12.00
Sinestro	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00

COSMIC JUSTICE ★				
Amazo	5	15.00	20.00	25.00
Atom	PR	15.00	20.00	25.00
Black Canary/Dinah Lance	PR5	20.00	25.00	30.00
Despero	6	12.00	15.00	18.00
Fatality/Yra Cynni	PR4	15.00	18.00	22.00
Martian Manhunter	6	30.00	35.00	40.00
Superman	6	15.00	20.00	25.00

UNLEASHED ★				
Batman	6	20.00	25.00	30.00
Green Lantern/Hal Jordan	PR6	30.00	40.00	50.00
Maqno	6	25.00	30.00	35.00
Suorman	6	40.00	50.00	60.00
Wonder Woman	6	15.00	20.00	25.00

LEGACY ★				
Ares	6	30.00	40.00	50.00
Flash	6	40.00	50.00	60.00
General Zod	6	12.00	15.00	18.00
Green Lantern	6	50.00	60.00	70.00
Hawkmant	6	12.00	15.00	18.00
Oracle	6	25.00	30.00	35.00
Red Robin	6	15.00	20.00	25.00
Ultraman	6	15.00	20.00	25.00
Wonder Woman	6	10.00	12.00	15.00

ICONS ★				
Brainiac	6	12.00	15.00	18.00
Princess Kandor	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Superman	5	12.00	15.00	18.00
The Flash	6	15.00	20.00	25.00

INDY HEROCLIX ★				
Ashleikh/Princess Ashleikh	PR350.00	60.00	70.00	
Helboy	6	15.00	18.00	22.00

MARVEL HEROCLIX: INFINITY CHALLENGE ★				
Annihilus	PR5	40.00	50.00	60.00
Ant-Man	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
Hobgoblin/Red Leeds	PR4	30.00	35.00	40.00
Hulk/Bruce Banner	PR5	40.00	50.00	60.00
Jean Grey	PR4	15.00	20.00	25.00
SHIELD, Medic/Tia Sarnak	PR4	20.00	25.00	30.00
Sabretooth/Victor Creed	PR5	50.00	60.00	70.00
Sentinel	PR	25.00	30.00	35.00

CLOBBERIN' TIME ★				
Black Widow/Natasha Romanoff	PR5	30.00	35.00	40.00
Blastaar/Blastar of Balaur	PR5	30.00	35.00	40.00
Weatherwax	6	30.00	40.00	50.00
SHIELD, Supa/Laura Brown	PR4	25.00	30.00	35.00
Spiral	6	15.00	18.00	22.00

KXPLOSION ★				
Destiny/Irene Adler	PR5	40.00	50.00	60.00
Doc Samson/Dr. Leonard Samson	PR5	30.00	35.00	40.00
Iscahan/Bobby Drake	PR5	15.00	20.00	25.00
Paramedic/Jane Foster	PR4	30.00	40.00	50.00
Scorpion/Mac Gargan	PR5	25.00	30.00	35.00

CRITICAL MASS ★				
Daredevil/Matt Murdock	PR5	15.00	18.00	22.00
Dreadnought/Silver Dreadnought	PR3	20.00	25.00	30.00
Galactus	PR	175.00	200.00	225.00
Meteorite/Dr. Karl Soren	PR5	40.00	50.00	60.00
Mole Man/Rupert	PR6	50.00	60.00	70.00
Rhino/Alex O'Hirn	PR3	30.00	35.00	40.00
Silver Surfer	6	30.00	40.00	50.00
Silver Surfer (Chrome)	PR	40.00	50.00	60.00

ULTIMATES ★				
Carnage	6	20.00	25.00	30.00
Hulk	6	15.00	20.00	25.00
Iron Man	6	25.00	30.00	35.00
Phoenix	6	15.00	18.00	22.00
Thor	6	30.00	40.00	50.00

MUTANT MAYHEM ★				
Dark Phoenix	PR	50.00	60.00	70.00
Gladiator	6	15.00	20.00	25.00
Loki	6	20.00	25.00	30.00
Nova	PR	15.00	20.00	25.00
Polaris	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00

FANTASTIC FORCES ★				
Nimrod	6	25.00	30.00	35.00
Professor Xavier	6	15.00	18.00	22.00
Spider-Man	6	15.00	20.00	25.00

HOT 10 MAGIC PROMOS

1. SOL RING \$125

Alpha
We figured we'd give you a look-see at one of the little perks given out to the peeps that make the Magic tournament scene run smoothly. Mishra's Factory has only been given to judges at Pro Tour-level events, while the Sol Rings and Armageddons have only been available to judges at those tournaments as well as Grand Prix and national championships. Every certified judge received Balance as a gift last year, while they all got a copy each of Deranged Hermit, Phyrexian Negator and Time Warp along with Stroke of Genius this year. Hermit Druid was also a judge gift last year, before it got banned from Extended, while the promo Gemstone Mine went to top-eight contenders at this year's Vintage and Legacy championships. Hypnotic Specter was sent to everyone who played in at least 20 sanctioned events in the last few months. ■ JS



2. GEMSTONE MINE \$125
Weatherlight

3. MISHRA'S FACTORY \$90
Antiquities



5. ARMAGEDDON \$40
Portal

7. DERANGED HERMIT \$15
Urza's Legacy



8. PHYREXIAN NEGATOR \$15
Urza's Destiny

10. HERMIT DRUID \$15
Stronghold

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HOT 10 VS. CARDS



SAVAGE BEATDOWN \$35

Marvel: Origins

The Vs. DC Justice League of America set has continued a strong series of releases for the game, with numerous cards at or near the double-digit price range. Tutors are the name of the game in the set, with several of them making our chart this month. Secret Origins, a plot twist that lets you search for any character with a cost equal to your opponent's most expensive one, heads the pack, with Kooley Kooley Kooley, Hero's Welcome and UN General Assembly right behind it. Meanwhile, KO'd pile abusers Sorcerer's Treasure and Straight to the Grave combo well with each other and fill out our JLA contingent along with card-drawer The Watchtower. Top card Savage Beatdown and plot twist-neutering Null Time Zone take up our last two slots. ■ JS



2. SECRET ORIGINS \$10

DC: Justice League of America



3. KOOLEY KOOLEY KOOLEY \$8

DC: Justice League of America



4. BWA HA HA HA HA! \$6

DC: Justice League of America



5. HERO'S WELCOME \$9

DC: Justice League of America



6. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY \$5

DC: Justice League of America



7. SORCERER'S TREASURE \$5

DC: Justice League of America



8. STRAIGHT TO THE GRAVE \$8

DC: Justice League of America



9. NULL TIME ZONE \$15

Marvel: The Avengers



10. THE WATCHTOWER \$4

DC: Justice League of America

NAME	RARITY	LOW	MEDIAN	HIGH
VS. TCG: MARVEL ORIGINS				
For all unlisted Vs. cards, use this table. Prices listed are for First Edition cards. Standard Edition cards' prices are 0.6x-0.8x their First Edition versions. Median foil prices are 1.2-1.5x non-foil versions.				
Rares		1.00	1.50	2.00
Uncommons		.25	.50	1.00
Commons		.10	.15	.25

A Child Named Valeria	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Antarctic Research Base	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Apoocalypse, En Sabah Nur	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Apoocalypse, En Sabah Nur (Bio art)	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
Asteroid M (Bio art)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
Bastion, Leader of Operation: Zero Tolerance	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Bastion, Leader of Operation: Zero Tolerance (Bio art)	PR	60.00	70.00	80.00
Boliver Trask, Creator of the Sentinel Program	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Boris, Personal Servant of Dr. Doom	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Cerebro (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Children of the Atom	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Children of the Atom (Bio art)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
Cosmic Radiation	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Dancer Room (Bio art)	PR	400.00	500.00	600.00
Deom Triumphant (Bio art)	PR	60.00	70.00	80.00
Doomstadt (Bio art)	PR	5.00	4.00	5.00
Dr. Doom, Diabolic Genius (Bio art)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
Dr. Doom, Lord of Latveria (Bio art)	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
Finishing Move (Bio art)	PR	30.00	40.00	50.00
Flame Troop	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Gamma Bomb (Bio art)	PR	15.00	20.00	25.00
Genosha	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Genosha (Bio art)	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
Global Domination (Bio art)	PR	20.00	25.00	30.00
Human Torch, Super Nova (Bio art)	PR	15.00	20.00	25.00
Invisible Woman, Sue Richards	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
It's Clobberin' Time	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Ka-Boom!	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Ka-Boom! (Bio art)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
Latveria	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Longshot, Rebel Freedom Fighter	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Magneto, Eric Lehnsherr (Bio art)	PR	2.00	3.00	4.00
Magneto: Lord Magnus	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Marvel Team-Up (Big art)	PR	80.00	100.00	120.00
Moria MacTaggart, World-Renowned Geneticist	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Mr. Fantastic, Scientific Genius	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Mr. Sinister, Dr. Nathaniel Essex	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Nightcrawler, Fuzzy Elf	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Onslaught, Psionic Spawn of Xavier and Magneto (Bio art)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Overload (Bio art)	PR	25.00	30.00	35.00
Quicksilver, Speed Demon	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Reign of Terror	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Rogue, Powerhouse (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Sabretooth, Feral Race	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Sabretooth, Feral Race (Bio art)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
Savage Beatdown	R	30.00	35.00	40.00
Savage Beatdown (Bio art)	PR	300.00	400.00	500.00
Sentinel Mark IV, Army (Bio art)	PR	3.00	4.00	5.00
Signal Flare	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
The New Brotherhood (Bio art)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Thing, Heavy Hitter	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Thing, The Ever-Lovin' Blue-Eyed Thing (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
War On Humanity (Bio art)	PR	25.00	30.00	35.00
Wolverine, James Howlett (Bio art)	PR	60.00	70.00	80.00
Wolverine, Logan (Bio art)	PR	2.00	3.00	4.00
Wolverine, New Fantastic Four	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

DC ORIGINS				
A Death in the Family	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Alfred Pennyworth, Faithful Friend	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Alfred Pennyworth, Faithful Friend (Bio art)	PR	70.00	80.00	90.00
Bane, The Man Who Broke the Bat (Bio art)	PR	2.00	3.00	4.00
Bart Allen - Kid Flash, Speedster (Bio art)	PR	200.00	225.00	250.00
Bat-Signal (Bio art)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Batman, The Dark Knight (Bio art)	PR	25.00	30.00	35.00
Beast Boy, Garfield Logan	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Break You (Big art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Cassandra Cain - Batgirl, Martial Artist (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Catwoman, Selina Kyle (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Commissioner Gordon, James Gordon (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00

Dick Grayson - Nightwing, Defender of Blüdhaven (Big art)	PR	2.00	3.00	4.00
Dick Grayson - Nightwing, High-Flying Acrobat	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Dick Grayson - Robin, Sidekick	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Fizzle	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Garth - Tempest, Atlantean Sorcerer	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Garth - Tempest, Atlantean Sorcerer (Bio art)	PR	60.00	70.00	80.00
GCPO Officer, Armv (Bio art)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Have a Blast!	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Have a Blast! (Bio art)	PR	30.00	40.00	50.00
Mountain Stronghold (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Opticon	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Re's al Ghul, The Demon's Head	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Scarecrow, Professor Jonathan Crane	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Superman, Big Blue Boy Scout	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Superman, Big Blue Boy Scout (Bio art)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Teen Titans Go! (Bio art)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Terra, Tara Markov	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
The Demon, Etigan	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
The Joker, Laughing Lunatic (Bio art)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
Total Anarchy	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Total Anarchy (Bio art)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Tower of Babel	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
USS Argus	R	4.00	5.00	6.00

MARVEL WEB OF SPIDER-MAN				
Bamf!	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Bamf! (Bio art)	PR	15.00	18.00	22.00
Dr. Octopus, Otto Octavius (Collector's tin)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Emma Frost, Headmistress of Xavier's Academy	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Fisk Towers	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Flamethrower	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Jetpack (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Kraven the Hunter, Sergei Kravynoff (Bio art)	PR	125.00	150.00	175.00
Latverian Embassy	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Mimic, Calvin Rankin	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Mimic, Calvin Rankin (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Nice Try!	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Pleasant Distraction (Bio art)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Sentinel Mark V, Army (Bio art)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
Silver Surfer, Norrin Radd	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Silver Surfer, Norrin Radd (Bio art)	PR	30.00	40.00	50.00
Spider-Man, Cosmic Spider-Man	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Spider-Man, Cosmic Spider-Man (Foil)	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Terrax, Tyrus	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Tombstone, Lonnie Lincoln	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Unmasked (Bio art)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
Venom, Alien Symbiote	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Will O' The Wisp, Jackson Arvad	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

DC SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL				
Barbara Gordon - Batgirl, Guardian of Gotham	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Brimstone, Engine of Destruction	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Darkseid, Lord of Apokolips	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Detective Work	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Donna Troy - Troia, Child of Myth (Bio art)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
Doomsday, Armageddon Creature	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Doomsday, Armageddon Creature (Bio art)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Imperix, The Beginning and The End	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Lex Luthor, President Luthor	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Roy Harper - Speedy, Mercurial Marksman	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Smiles, Everyone!	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Superman, Blue	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Superman, Clark Kent (Bio art)	PR	6.00	8.00	10.00
Superman, Man of Steel	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Superman, Red (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Takion - Highfitter, Josh Saunders	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
The Demon's Head	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
The Exchange	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
The Joker, Emperor Joker	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
The Source	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
X-Ray Vision	R	2.00	3.00	4.00

MARVEL KNIGHTS				
Blade, Eric Brooks	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Blind Justice	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Bullseye, Deadly Marksman	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Daredevil, Matt Murdock	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Daredevil, Matt Murdock (Stacker)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Deadpool, Wade Wilson	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Doon, Ultimate Weapon (Stacker)	PR	20.00	25.00	30.00
Dracula, Vlad Dracula	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Luke Cage, Power Man	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Mekano	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Mystic Chain	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Orphan, Good Guy (Stacker)	PR	25.00	30.00	35.00

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NAME	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Phat, William Reilly	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Professor X, Mental Master	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Punisher, Juv (Stacker)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Scarlet Spider - Spider-Man, Successor	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Scarlet Witch, Eldritch Enchantress	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Weapon of Choice	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Weapon of Choice (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Wild Ride	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Wild Ride (Bio art)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Yelena Belova - Black Widow, Enemy Agent	R	2.00	3.00	4.00

DC GREEN LANTERN CORPS

Breakino Ground, Construct R	3.00	4.00	5.00	
Breakino Ground, Construct (Bio art)	PR	5.00	7.00	9.00
Death of Superman	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Fifth Dimension	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Guy Gardner, Strong Arm of the Corps (Bio art)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Hal Jordan, Green Lantern of Sector 2814	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Hal Jordan, Parallax	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Hal Jordan, Parallax (Foil)	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Hal Jordan, Reborn	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Hal Jordan, Reborn (Bio art)	PR	20.00	25.00	30.00
Hal Jordan - Spectre, Mortal Avatar	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
In the Hands of Qward	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Korugar	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Kyle Ravner, Ion	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Kyle Ravner, Last Green Lantern (Bio art)	PR	3.00	4.00	5.00
Nero, Qwardian Puppet (Bio art)	PR	2.00	2.50	3.00
Oa	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
Oa (Bio art)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
Qwardian Council Hall	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Shadows of the Past	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Sinestro, Enemy of the Corps	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Sinestro, Green Lantern of Korugar	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Sinestro, Green Lantern of Korugar (Bio art)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
The Manhunters are a Myth	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Two-Face, Split Personality	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Willworld	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Willworld (Bio art)	PR	15.00	20.00	25.00

MARVEL THE AVENGERS

Avengers Assemble	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Avengers Mansion	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Captain America, Super Soldier	R	10.00	12.00	15.00
Doctor Spectrum, Joe Ledger	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Earth's Mightiest Heroes	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Earth's Mightiest Heroes (Bio art)	PR	10.00	12.00	15.00
Hawkeye, Leader by Example	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Hulk, Gamma Rage	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Hulk, Gamma Rage (Bio art)	PR	4.00	6.00	8.00

NAME	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Jarvis, Honorary Avenger	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Kana, Immortus	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Kang, Kang Kong	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Kano, Lord Kano	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Marvel's Most Wanted	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Molnir (Bio art)	PR	30.00	35.00	40.00
Monica Rambeau - Captain Marvel, Lady of Light	R	5.00	7.00	9.00
New Identity	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Null Time Zone	R	12.00	15.00	18.00
Project Liberator	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Spider-Man, Peter Parker (Bio art)	PR	60.00	80.00	100.00
System Failure	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Thor, God of Thunder	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Thor, God of Thunder (Foil)	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Thor, Odinson	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
Thor, Odinson (Bio art)	PR	50.00	60.00	70.00
War of Attrition	R	4.00	5.00	6.00

DC JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Attend or Die!	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Barry Allen - The Flash, Scarlet Speedster	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
BWA HA HA HA HA!	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Captain Marvel, Billy Batson	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Crisis on Infinite Earths, Team-Up	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Hero's Welcome	R	7.00	9.00	12.00
Injustice Gano Satellite	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Koovev Koovev Koovev	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Lex Luthor, Criminal Genius (Bio art)	PR	8.00	10.00	12.00
Look-Alike Squad	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Martian Manhunter, J'onn J'onzz (Bio art)	PR	4.00	5.00	6.00
Martian Manhunter, Manhunter from Mars (Bio art)	PR	12.00	15.00	18.00
Monitor Womb Station	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
New Era	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Philosopher's Stone	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Plastic Man, Eel O'Brian	R	4.00	6.00	8.00
Poison Ivy, Deadly Rose	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Power Siphon	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
Rav Palmer - The Atom, World's Smallest Hero	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Secret Orions	R	8.00	10.00	12.00
Sinestro, Corrupted by the Ring	R	2.00	2.50	3.00
Sorcerer's Treasure	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Straight to the Grave	R	6.00	8.00	10.00
Superman, Avatar of Peace	R	2.00	3.00	4.00
The Watchtower	R	3.00	4.00	5.00
UN General Assembly	R	4.00	5.00	6.00
Wonder Woman, Avatar of Truth	R	3.00	4.00	5.00

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST PROMOS

Have you got the stones for the *Fullmetal Alchemist TCG*'s hot new promo cards? Here's how you can grab the game's newest batch.



EDWARD ELRIC'S ARM BLADE

2005 League Participation



I'VE GOT THE STONES

2005 League Winner



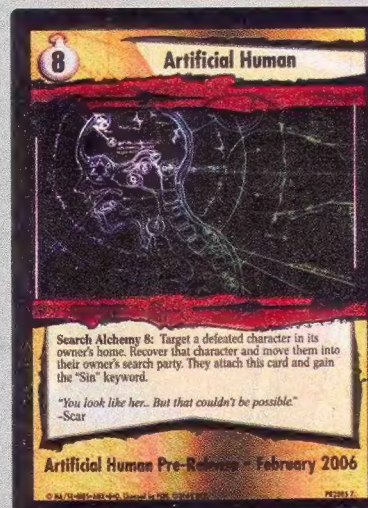
ALPHONSE ELRIC, TIRELESS FIGHTER

2005 Gen Con So Cal Participation



THE ELRIC BROTHERS, EDWARD AND ALPHONSE

2006 10-Tournament Participation



ARTIFICIAL HUMAN

Artificial Human Prerelease Participation



ALPHONSE ELRIC, IMPENETRABLE ARMOR

Wizard World Convention Exclusive

DEAD MAN'S HAND

DEAD MAN'S HAND HINT

Abuse the token interaction between Twilight Drover and Cloudstone Curio to grow a gigantic, winged Drover.

DEAD MAN'S HAND SOLUTION

1. Tap Selesnya Sanctuary and seven Forests to add * and eight green mana to your mana pool.
2. Play Pollenbright Wings on Twilight Drover and return Fists of Ironwood to your hand via Cloudstone Curio. (Mana pool: ♣♣♣)
3. Replay Fists on the Drover and skip the Curio. Since it's Doubling Season, Fists puts four Saproling tokens into play. Curio's ability triggers once for each token. (Mana pool: ♣)
4. While the four Curio abilities are on the stack, tap the four Saprolings and pay your last mana to convoke Scatter the Seeds, creating six more Saprolings and six more Curio abilities. Tap those Saprolings to tap Alaborn Zealot and Treefolk Mystic with Sandsower.
5. Allow all 10 of Curio's triggered abilities to resolve, each returning another Saproling to your hand, from which they immediately disappear: Drover triggers for each Saproling bounced and gets 20 +1/+1 counters thanks to Doubling Season.
6. Attack with the overgrown Drover: Starshine blocks with Voracious Cobra.
7. Tap your last Forest for ♣, then tap Selesnya Evangel and Nullmage Shepherd to make two more Saprolings. In response to Curio's trigger, use one to convoke Gather Courage onto Drover, making it a 23/23. Tap the other Saproling, Sandsower and Watchwolf to play Devouring Light on the Voracious Cobra. Curio returns the two Saprolings to your hand, bringing Drover up to 27/27.
8. With no blockers left standing, Drover tramples 27 damage onto Starshine. Pollenbright Wings fertilizes like crazy and makes 54 Saproling tokens. Ignore the Curio; these Sappies are staying in play.

THE INQUEST IQ TEST

PICK YOUR BRAINS.
NOT YOUR NOSE



YO HO HO AND A BOTTLE OF MOUNTAIN DEW...
With two movie sequels to "Pirates of the Caribbean" in the works—one of which is due this summer—and games such as WizKids' *Pirates CSG* and Upper Deck's *PotC TCG* cashing in on the bootylicious craze (see page 72 for more), can you blame us for keelhauling coworkers under the chassis of our Volkswagen beetles and paying for Whoppers with pieces of eight? Can you blame us for coming down with scurvy and trying to bring three-cornered hats back into style? No. And if you're as excited as we are about the swashbuckling, bloodthirsty, lice-ridden game potential of these seafaring plunderers, just wait till you get to #6's gratuitous Jessica Alba question!

1 What was the real name of Blackbeard?

2 On who did Johnny Depp model the character of Capt. Jack Sparrow?



CAPT. JACK SPARROW

3 Match each pirate with his name.



1. Psycho Pirate 2. Captain Hook 3. Captain Morgan 4. Dread Pirate Roberts



ONE-EYED WILLY'S TREASURE HUNTERS

4 In what film would you find the pirate One-Eyed Willy?

5 William S. Gilbert (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame) wrote what operetta about romantic buccaneers?

6 In what 2005 movie did Jessica Alba find long-lost pirate booty?



JESSICA ALBA

7 In 1984's sci-fi comedy "The Ice Pirates," what kind of alien escapes aboard the ship and terrorizes the crew?

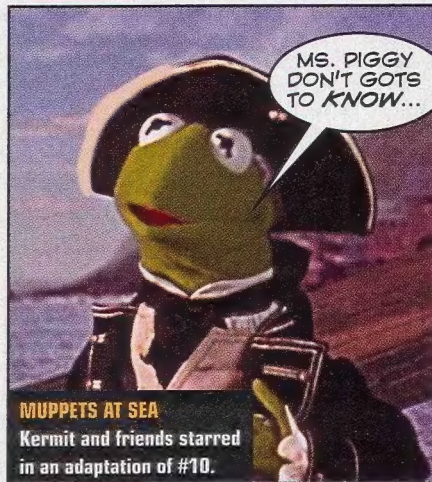


MAGICAL PIRATES

8 What artifact-stealing pirates showed up in *Magic's Mirage* expansion?

9 What city's Major League Baseball team is the Pirates?

10 In what classic novel would you find Long John Silver and his parrot, Cap'n Flint?



MUPPETS AT SEA
Kermit and friends starred in an adaptation of #10.

ANSWERS: 1) Edward Teach. 2) The Rolling Stones' Keith Richards. 3) A. 4) B. 2. C. 1. D. 3. 4) 1985's "The Goonies." 5) "The Pirates of Penzance." 6) "Into the Blue." 7) Space Invaders. 8) Kikkensia Pirates. 9) Yep, that spells ass-me-fuck backwards. 10) Pittsburgh.

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS NEVERWINTER NIGHTS 2 PREVIEW



TNOQUEST

#131

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X-MEN VS. X-MEN

MAGIC ▶
The Gathering®

TOP 10 GUILD PACT CARDS

Complete players guide

**HEROCLIX:
THE ULTIMATE
POWERHOUSE**

We rate the best figures
of all time in damage potential!

STAR WARS:

Attack on Endor:
First Look



IN COMIC SHOPS **FEBRUARY 1, 2006**
ON NEWSSTANDS **FEBRUARY 14, 2006**

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